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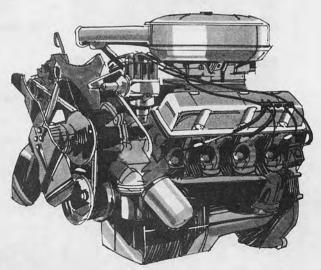
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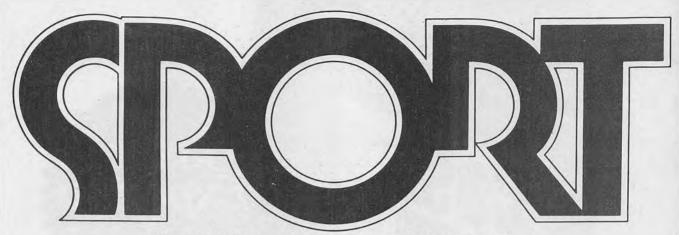
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30TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

AUG. 1976 VOL. 63, NO. 2

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# AUGUST THIS MONTH IN SPORT



ROBERT WARD

Robert Ward is the first writer I can think of to make his debut in SPORT with two stories simultaneously—one about the winning heroes of the 1975 World Series, Pete Rose and Joe Morgan, and the other about the losing hero, Bernie Carbo—but he certainly was the right man to handle both pieces.

For instance, as Ward was putting the finishing touches on his Carbo story, the Red Sox were putting the finishing touches on Carbo's Boston career. He was being traded off to Milwaukee, at the age of 28, his fourth major-league city. Coincidentally, Ward, too, was moving into his fourth big-league city, New York, having warmed up in Baltimore, worshipping John Unitas; in San Francisco, doing a convincing portrayal of a hippie; and in Cincinnati, teaching at a nearby college.

And if Ward could give Carbo a course in urban geography, he could also teach Pete Rose how to hustle, but not exactly in the same way Rose has become famous for hustling. Ward has hustled not to win, but to survive. In San Francisco, for instance, in order to eat on a fairly regular basis, Ward sold phony watches to unsuspecting marks. His specialties were "im-

ported" watches that, if left alone in an empty room on a velvet pillow, would fall apart within a fortnight. The only time Ward demonstrated his hustle by diving headfirst—a la Rose—was when a mark caught on to his game.

Ward has also conned people as a professor of English and creative writing, as a freelance journalist (many of his best pieces have appeared in New Times) and as a novelist. His first comic novel, Shedding Skin, came out five years ago, and his second, Dead People, should be coming out next year. Dead People is, in part, about comic terrorists who demonstrate their feelings toward the Establishment by blowing up a McDonald's. No matter how the critics receive the work, Ward suspects that his future is in professional basketball. This suspicion is based on his belief-shared by his friends-that he is the only basketball player in the world who improved dramatically after the age of 30. And this belief is based, in turn, on the even stronger belief-shared by everyone—that Ward was worthless when he was 29. "I once went one-on-one with Alcindor," says Ward, "and I dunked over him. He was so embarrassed he changed his name."

Ward was happy to discover, in writing the two SPORT pieces, that he got along fine with Pete Rose, Joe Morgan and Bernie Carbo. It's a pity Carbo no longer has a toy gorilla. Ward would have gotten along even better with him.

Our story on "Musical Chairs at the Mike" reminds me of an incident that may never have taken place—but should have. Supposedly, a few years ago, on a trip to Minneapolis, New York Yankee broadcaster Phil Rizzuto was looking for a bridge game, but couldn't find any players. He was told everyone had gone to the movies—to see a new porno film called "Deep Throat."

"Want to go?" Rizzuto was asked.

"Oh, no," he said, "I don't think so."

"Oh, c'mon." Finally, Rizzuto agreed to go—on the condition he and his companion sit inconspicuously in the back.

Then Rizzuto walked in, took one look at the screen and, in his best broadcasting voice, boomed, "Holy Cow!"

Dick School





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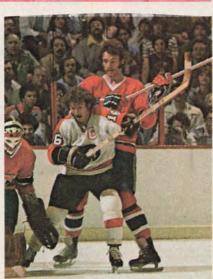




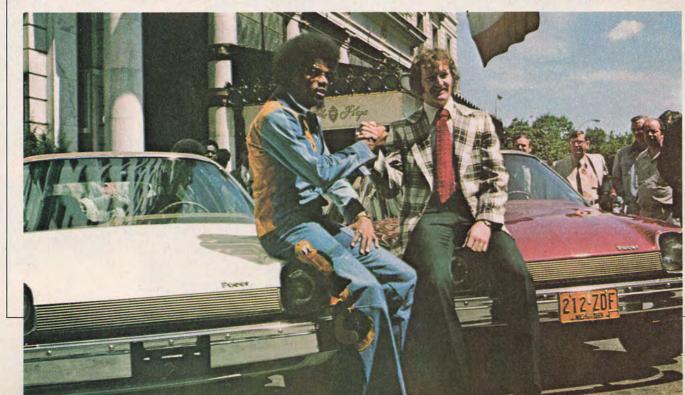


Comedian Billy Crystal, above, broke up, from the left, Dave DeBusschere, Kevin Loughery and Net star Julius Erving the SPORT-AMC MVP of the ABA playoffs.









# SPORT TALKSS

#### PLAYOFF PACERS

For the first time in the six years of SPORT's Most Valuable Player Award in the National Hockey League Stanley Cup finals, the magazine's choice did not coincide with the league's choice to win the Conn Smythe Trophy.

For the first time in the four years of SPORT's Most Valuable Player Award in the American Basketball Association playoff finals, the magazine selected a previous winner of the honor.

And for the first time in the eight years of SPORT's Most Valuable Player Award in the National Basketball Association playoff finals, the magazine picked a winner who has never been a first-string NBA All-Star.

Two of the three choices were fairly simple. But Larry Robinson was very tough.

The first five winners of SPORT's NHL award were All-Stars (Bobby Orr, Ken Dryden, Yvan Cournoyer and—twice—Bernie Parent), and each enjoyed a superb Stanley Cup series, from first round to last, in leading his team to a championship. Orr was, by consensus, simply the greatest hockey player who had ever lived, and the other three men had glittering statistics to back up their MVP claims.

But in the 1976 Stanley Cup finals, defenseman Larry Robinson of the Montreal Canadiens scored only one goal. He did not make a single save. But he led the champion Canadiens in a statistic that defies easy measurement: Bruises inflicted

No one was surprised when Julius Erving (in white) was named MVP of the ABA finals, but Larry Robinson (in plaid jacket) and Jo Jo White (right) were unexpected winners in the NHL and NBA, respectively.



upon the bodies and egos of the strong and proud defending-champion Philadelphia Flyers.

Led by Robinson on defense and Dryden in goal and Guy LaFleur on offense, Montreal swept four straight games from the defending champions, a rout that made it impossible for SPORT—which bases its MVP award purely on the final round-to honor the NHL's Conn Smythe winner, Reggie Leach of Philadelphia. Leach, who scored a record 19 goals in 16 playoff games, obviously deserved the Smythe Trophy—it is based on the full Stanley Cup playoffs, not just the final round—but Larry Robinson, who had never before won an MVP award of any kind in any professional league, was entitled to SPORT's award, as well as the 1976 Pacer, presented by the American Motors Corporation, that went along with

The MVP in the ABA was Dr. J. No contest. Not only did the great Doctor—Julius Erving—lead the second-place New York Nets to a six-game victory over the favored Denver Nuggets, but he led them in so dramatic, so awesome, so complete a manner that, by the end of the playoffs, a large percentage of the country that had previously ignored the ABA was willing to concede that the greatest basketball player in the whole world was alive and well and living in virtual seclusion in Long Island's Nassau Coliseum, the Nets' home arena.

In the six playoff games of the final round, Erving led the Nets in scoring (34.6 points a game), in rebounding, in assists, in steals, in stuffs, in ovations, in charisma and in mod fashions. He scored 48 points one game and 45 another, and when the Nets were in desperate trouble in the sixth game, 22 points behind early in the second half and apparently heading toward a decisive seventh game in Denver, the Doctor made them well. He scored 20 points in the second half, and saved his teammates from the discomfort of a trip to Colorado. That final game drew 15,934 fans to the Nassau Coliseum, most of them screaming in the closing minutes, and Dr. J said it was the first time in his Net career that he could feel the crowd getting him high. It was only fair: He has been getting crowds high for years.

Dr. J. and Larry Robinson picked up



their Pacers, and plenty of praise, at a luncheon at the Plaza Hotel in Manhattan. Roy Boe, the man who owns both the Nets and the only team to win a 1976 Stanley Cup game from the Canadiens (the Islanders), was one of the speakers, and he told Erving how proud he and all the other directors of the Nets were to be working for the Doctor. Dave DeBusschere, the commissioner of the ABA, said he was alad his own reputation as a defensive genius had never been tested by Dr. J., and he spoke of Erving's enormous strengths as a human being as well as a player. Billy Crystal, the young comic whose wit has become a trademark of SPORT's MVP luncheons (he hasn't done badly, either, on The Tonight Show and All in the Family) spoke of growing up on Long Island a decade ago and being so happy to read in the papers about a great local high-school basketball player named Erving. "At last," said Crystal, "a Jewish superstar." Crystal confessed to other semantic problems: Whenever he hears hockey players talking about winning with "crisp checking," it always sounds to him as though a French waiter is pushing the cog course.

For a while, it looked as though SPORT would never get to present an MVP award in the NBA, that the playoffs would last into the World Series. But then, as May turned into June, the Boston Celtics turned into champions for the 13th time in 20 seasons, and Jo Jo White, the former Kansas and Olympic star, emerged as a surprising MVP.

Before the final playoffs began, Dave Cowens, healthy and eager, was the favorite to lead Boston to victory over Phoenix, but the stunning Suns' stunning rookie center, Alvan Adams, ruined Cowens' MVP aspirations. Adams led both teams in scoring in the six-game series with 138 points, and if his Cinderella team hadn't turned back into a pumpkin, he might have walked off with both the plaque and the Pacer.

White led both teams in minutes played and in assists, and many of his 130 points—the most by any Celtic—seemed to come just when Boston needed them most. Each of White's MVP predeces-

sors—Jerry West, Willis Reed (twice), Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Wilt Chamberlain, John Havlicek and Rick Barry—was a certified superstar, a first-string All-Star, but Jo Jo was the first winner to be just a routine star. He did not, in fact, make either the first or second NBA All-Star team for the 1975-76 season, and that oversight made the MVP luncheon in his honor, held at the Sheraton-Boston, all the sweeter.

Dick Schaap

#### MACK IS BACK

When a group of former Olympians were honored this spring during the Mt. San Antonio College Relays, most of the cheers went to two ex-gold medalists, Parry O'Brien, the shot-put champion in 1952 and 1956, and Bob Beamon, the long-jump champion in 1968. The introduction of a white-haired black man named Mack Robinson drew only a smattering of polite applause. Most of the younger athletes competing in the Mt. SAC Relays had no idea who Mack Robinson is

This is who Mack Robinson is: In the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, he won a silver medal for finishing second in the 200-meter dash behind Jesse Owens. And ten years later, he saw his brother become the most famous black man in the United States.

Mack Robinson's kid brother was expected to compete as a long jumper in the 1940 Olympics. But World War II knocked out those games, and if Branch Rickey hadn't decided to integrate organized baseball in 1946, Jackie Robinson today might be as poorly remembered as his brother Mack.

-D.S.

#### FOUL PLAY

Tim Sullivan, Randy Wievel and Bob Pesch like to think of themselves as the best team of baseball-in-the-stands retrievers in the major leagues. When the three 26-year-old men informed "The Baseball World of Joe Garagiola" of their startling skills, they were invited to demonstrate them before the cameras in Detroit on August 10, 1975. So the trio from Stevens Point, Wisc., packed their telescoping golf ball retriever, their baseball gloves and their Gold Converse All-Star sneakers and flew to Detroit.

They met the NBC sports crew and Garagiola, then went to the left-field boxes as Tiger third-base coach Joe Schultz was asked to bloop fungoes into the section. Unfortunately, Schultz' fungoes kept landing everyplace except in the section. So he decided on a different approach. He started throwing balls into the left-field seats.

Now, the primary technique used by the trio to grab balls before others in the area can get to them is a variation of basketball's pick-and-roll play. Each man occupies an aisle seat. When a ball sails into the area, Pesch, a 250-pounder also known as "Big Balloon," jumps out and blocks the aisle while Sullivan and Wievel give chase. The trio claimed Pesch set a better pick than Wes Unseld. A young and very agile kid in an orange jacket did not believe the claim. He kept slipping past Pesch and beating Wievel and Sullivan to every ball Schultz threw, which blew the filming. Finally Big Balloon Pesch yelled, "I've had all I can take of this. I just ain't blocking any more if that kid gets another one!"

Garagiola stepped in and told the kid: "Son, I'll give you a ball, I'll even autograph it. I'll do anything you want. But please, just let the fat guy block you!" The kid agreed.

No one noticed that batting practice had begun until a Willie Horton shot crashed like a mortar round into a seat behind them. Next the Minnesota Twins stepped into the batting cage. Pesch, who had never caught a ball himself and who had in fact been charged by his colleagues with more than 20 errors in the past six years, suddenly looked up as a line drive hit well in front of him and bounced right into his lap. He hopped up, staring into the batting cage, and shouted, "God bless Eric Soderholm!"

All told, the trio acquired six legitimate batting-practice balls and two others after the kid in the orange jacket had been bought off.

However, when the game itself started, the incredible ball retrievers managed to grab not a single ball. But Joe Garagiola came up with Phil Roof's ninth-inning home-run ball. Garagiola had watched the game from an empty section of the left-field bleachers.

"Heck, you guys with your fancy systems got it all wrong," Joe said later. "All you gotta do is buy out the whole section and wait. The closest guy from me was in Cleveland."

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# **DETTERS**

#### SPORT SPECIAL

The articles on Tom Payne and Michael James (Basketball Behind Bars: Two Superstars In Prison, June) were the most interesting sports-related features I have read in a long time. With the emphasis on our younger generation to perform as professionals at all levels of athletics today, these pressures could result in similar hardships to those youngsters maturing with the same dream as Michael James and Tom Payne. Let the article be a warning to our society that athletes of all ages, creed, race and religion are human and their mental development is more important than their athletic development.

Ed Weiner

Kingsport, Tenn.

The only thing wrong with your article "Basketball Behind Bars: Two Superstars In Prison," was the title. Whether Tom Payne and Michael James are quilty of the offenses for which they were convicted may be debatable, but by no seven-foot stretch of the imagination is either one of them guilty of being a superstar. Payne's rookie season with the Hawks was anything but starlike, and James' stats in high school have been matched by thousands of now-anonymous hopefuls.

The unfortunate propensity for overstatement among contemporary sportswriters only serves to cheapen the accomplishments of those actually deserving of their titles.

Don Good Harrisonburg, Va.

As a young woman concerned about women's rights in rape cases, I began reading your article on Tom Payne with more than a grain of skepticism. After all, SPORT is geared more for men than women, and a thoroughly chauvinistic story of an innocent man "seduced" by the "evil" woman probably would not have met much criticism from your readers.

In that sense, I was pleasantly surprised by the article. It appeared to be fair and

more or less unbiased in its portrayal of Tom Payne's experience. I was horrified by the obvious lack of conclusive evidence that led to Payne's conviction. Let's hope your article spurs a nationwide campaign to free Tom Payne.

I sure need something to restore my vouthful idealism.

Sharon Zeigler Blacksburg, Va.

#### V FOR HHH

I read with great interest your story "Who'll Be The Next Jock In The White House" (June), particularly the part about Hubert Humphrey.

Humphrey araduated high school from a class of 13 seniors and a student body of just over 50 pupils. His first political victory occurred in high school, when he won a debate with the village fathers over the issue of purchasing a new gym. It was only a few years later that Doland, a town of 600, won the South Dakota basketball championship.

Orville D. Loomis Avon, N.Y.

#### F FOR LARRY L. KING

In very poor taste. That's the only way to describe Larry L. King's statement concerning Senator Kennedy at Chappaquiddick ["a strong swimmer against tides and currents—though obviously an indifferent diver"]. If Mr. King is proud of that brand of humor, perhaps he should be sent to cover the Civil War in Lebanon. Maybe there he can find other instances in which to delight himself with his self-satisfying satire.

Mike Pare Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

#### **BAN POLITICS**

I think your magazine would be a lot better if you would stick to sports and not go off writing about politics and jail as you did in your June issue. If we wanted to read about these things we would read the papers.

**Kelly Minton** Orleans, Ind.

#### BUSH

It's time someone stood up for the umpires in professional baseball. I refer to the article by Marty Bell about Dave Cash and Larry Bowa (To Enemy Pitchers And Hitters, Cash And Bowa Of The Phillies Are A

Pair Of Four-Letter Words, June). Specifically, I'm referring to Bowa's bush comment concerning minor-league umpire Ken Kaiser. It shows a lack of class on Bowa's part to make that remark behind Kaiser's back. He wouldn't make it to Kaiser's face because Mr. Kaiser would probably tie a bow around him and air mail him back to the Little League.

If your writers would spend more time talking with umpires, they'd find these people are more concerned with the image of baseball than are 50 percent of the players. Umpires don't receive \$100,000 no-cut contracts.

Jack M. Clark Margate, Fla.

#### THIRD BEST

I note on page 94 and 95 of the Paul Silas article in the May issue (After The Brinks Robbery, The Biggest Heist In Boston . . . Paul Silas Of The Celtics) that the following statement is made by author Bob Wischnia: "Boston won 68 games and lost 14, which was and is the second-best record in NBA history."

As a statistical nut, I must disagree. The best record in NBA history is the Los Angeles Lakers' 69-13 mark during the 1971-72 season. The second best is the 68-13 mark of the Philadelphia 76ers in the 1966-67 season. So Boston's total is third best. Actually, these ratings are only based on numbers and if you compared these three teams with the calibre of the opposition, you would find that the Sixers' record was achieved in a ten-team circuit, while Los Angeles' and Boston's figures were gained in a diluted 17-team circuit.

Harvey Pollack Publicity Director Philadelphia 76ers

#### SECOND STRING?

In your May article on Boston's Paul Silas, you mention that the Celtics reacquired Charlie Scott for a "second-string Celtic." Well, that "second-string Celtic" just happens to be a fellow named Paul Westphal, who has established himself as one of the best all-around guards in basketball.

William E. Carsley Chicago, III

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Rawly Eastwick

- 1. Prior to 1975, in what year did the Cincinnati Reds last win the World Series?
- a. 1961
- **b.** 1940
- c. 1919
- **2.** Who was the last pitcher to win 20 games for the Reds?
- a. Jack Billingham
- b. Jim Maloney
- c. Jim Merritt
- **3.** Against which teams did former Red Johnny Vander Meer pitch the only back-to-back no-hitters in major-league history?
- a. Boston and St. Louis
- b. St. Louis and Brooklyn
- c. Boston and Brooklyn
- **4.** Which of these Cincinnati players was once named National League Rookie of the Year?
- a. Tommy Helms
- b. Vada Pinson
- c. Tony Perez



**Don Gullett** 

- **5.** Which of the following former Reds never hit three home runs in a single game?
- a. Art Shamsky
- b. Wally Post
- c. Frank Robinson
- **6.** Who is the only pitcher on the present-day Reds to have won more than one World Series game in his career?
- a. Rawly Eastwick
- b. Don Gullett
- c. Gary Nolan
- **7.** Who was the losing pitcher in what has been called the "greatest World Series game ever," the sixth game of the 1975 Series?
- a. Pat Darcy
- b. Will McEnaney
- c. Rawly Eastwick
- **8.** Which of these Reds has won the National League Most Valuable Player Award twice?
- a. Joe Morgan
- b. Pete Rose
- c. Johnny Bench
- **9.** Which of the following former Reds was never the National League's Most Valuable Player?
- a. Ted Kluszewski
- b. Ernie Lombardi
- c. Bucky Walters
- **10.** On June 14, 1965, which New York Met homered in the 11th inning to beat the Reds' Jim Maloney, after he had pitched ten innings of no-hit baseball?
- a. Jesse Gonder
- b. Johnny Lewis
- c. Ron Swoboda

- **11.** True or False. A Cincinnati pitcher has never been the winner of the Cy Young Award.
- **12.** What former pitcher gave Pete Rose the nickname "Charley Hustle?"
- a. Jim Bouton
- b. Don Drysdale
- c. Whitey Ford
- **13.** Who was the last Cincinnati player to hit at least 40 home runs in one season?
- a. Lee May
- b. Johnny Bench
- c. Tony Perez
- **14.** Which of these former National League pitchers never pitched a no-hitter?



**Gary Nolan** 

- a. Ken Holtzman
- b. Bill Singer
- c. Rick Wise
- **15.** Last season the Reds set a major-league record for most consecutive games without a complete game by a pitcher. How many games was it and who broke the streak?
- a. 35—Jack Billingham
- b. 40-Gary Nolan
- c. 45—Pat Darcy
- **16.** Which of the following pitchers was not selected as a first-round draft choice by the Reds?
- a. Rawly Eastwick
- b. Don Gullett
- c. Gary Nolan

FOR ANSWERS TURN TO PAGE 92



# POU USED TO BE...

THE BEST RELIEF
PITCHER IN BASEBALL?



DICK RADATZ

In the early 1960s, while one of today's premier relief pitchers, Al Hrabosky (see page 30), was being rejected in tryouts for three different Little League teams, relief pitching was dominated—physically and statistically-by the Boston Red Sox' sixfoot-six, 255-pound Dick Radatz, Nicknamed "The Monster" because of his imposing physical stature, Radatz was actually an affable, even-tempered person-until he stepped on the mound and started flinging his vaunted fastball at intimidated batters. In four seasons with the Red Sox, from 1962 through 1965, Radatz appeared in 270 games, pitched 537.4 innings and struck out 608 batters—a large portion of them no doubt terrified by the proximity of the huge pitcher towering over them, only 60 feet, six inches away. Radatz won a total of 49 games in relief for the Sox, leading the American League for three years in that category and also leading the league in saves in 1962 (24) and 1964 (29). "Dick Radatz," says Al Kaline, the former Detroit Tiger slugger whom Radatz frustrated on many occasions, "is the best relief pitcher I've ever seen."

As an undergraduate at Michigan State University, however, it looked like Radatz might choose basketball as a vocation over baseball. "I was playing both sports," he recalls, "and I was at MSU on a basketball scholarship. That had always been my favorite sport. But then my grades started to slip and I decided I'd have a better shot in the pros if I concentrated solely on baseball." The decision proved to be a sound one, as Radatz played three full years of varsity baseball for MSU, finishing his senior year with an impressive 10-1 record which led him to a \$20,000 bonus when he signed with the Red Sox in 1959 after graduating from MSU.

Radatz spent the 1959, 1960 and 1961 seasons in the minors, pitching for Raleigh, Minneapolis and Seattle and learning to control a temper that—when a call went against him—impelled him to charge umpires and, on one occasion, throw his glove into the stands. When he finally learned to channel his anger toward opposing batters, Radatz struck out 74 men in 71 innings of relief for Seattle and was most impressive in an exhibition against the Red Sox that year. He pitched a shutout, allowing only one hit and striking out six batters—a performance which

ultimately led to a promotion to the Sox after a strong training camp the following spring.

Radatz attributes his tremendous success as a reliever to the fact that he threw fastballs 85 percent of the time. "Fastballs don't take as much out of your arm," he says. "A fastball merely stretches the muscles but a curve twists them." That affinity for the fastball tormented many batters, especially the New York Yankees' Mickey Mantle. "I always enjoyed facing Mantle," Radatz chuckles, "not only because he was such a helluva ballplayer but because I had such great luck against him. He got only one hit off me in five years . . . a home run in Yankee Stadium, It was funny, though, because he threw his bat about thirty feet in the air when he hit it. He thought he popped it up but he was so damn strong, the ball carried out of the park and landed in center field by the bull pen. When he crossed home plate, Mantle was laughing and he yelled over to me: 'It took me five years . . . but I finally gotcha.' He never got me again after that day, though."

Radatz enjoyed similar success against many other sluggers until early in the 1966 season when—after a miserable start—the Red Sox traded him to the Cleveland Indians. "That really broke my heart," says Radatz, "especially when I think of the great year they had in sixty-seven. You know, sometimes a trade helps a player and he moves on to greater things. But I think that trade really hurt me mentally."

That anguish manifested itself in Radatz' pitching and by 1969—after unsuccessfully trying to re-discover his lost fastball with four different major-league and two minor-league teams—Radatz quit baseball. "A relief pitcher's life is a short one at best," Radatz recalls, "and I'd already had four really great years with the Red Sox."

Now living in Farmingdale, Mich., with his wife and three children and working for Dickson & Associates, an industrial lumber firm, Radatz watches baseball but is disappointed in the quality of the game. "I really hate to say this," he says, "but the game is saturated. I don't think there's as much talent as there was ten, fifteen years ago. I see guys playing now that, hell, wouldn't have been good AA players when I was playing."





# Pete Rose & Joe Morgan Will Defend Their Championship To The Death

BY ROBERT WARD

It's two hours before game time and Pete Rose, Joe Morgan and Johnny Bench are taking batting practice in the Cincinnati Reds' underground batting cage. It's a strange, grim place, like some kind of Dostoyevskian cellar in Petersburg. The surrounding walls are rat grey and the air is subterraneous dank. Out on the field it's still raining, and the big new suction machines are drawing the moisture from the AstroTurf like so many metal vampires. Obviously the stagnant atmosphere has to annoy even the Reds' perpetual optimists, Rose and Morgan.

"Lousy day, huh?" Ted Kluszewski, the Reds' batting coach, says as Pete Rose steps into the batter's box.

Rose appears to ignore Big Klu. Pete is alternately smiling and grimacing as he waves his big Adirondack bat like a magic wand. Broadcaster Joe Nuxhall, a former pitcher, throws the first pitch, and Rose stands there waiting, waiting, waiting... until the ball is just in front of him. Then he whips out of his crouch and smashes the ball back into the net. He smiles broadly,

coiling back into his crouch.

"Don't worry about rainouts," Pete Rose says. "We have had only one rainout in two years. It can be raining a half hour away from game time, but once they get the machines working...it'll be dry as a bone. Besides, when the Reds play, it's always sunny."

Little Joe Morgan is standing outside of the batting net, beating the clay from his shoes with his bat. "You said it, man," Morgan says. "We are gonna hit Tom Seaver [of the Mets] tonight."

"And then move into first," Rose says. "Everybody keeps asking me about the Dodgers!" He breaks off his words to swing and smack another liner. "But we aren't worried about the Dodgers."

Morgan smiles and says, "Worried about the Dodgers? They better worry about us! What other team in baseball has a team like this?"

Rose raps his bat on the ground. "We play like we're able to play," he says, "and we're the best. I mean, the Dodgers are a solid team, sure, but if one of their pitchers goes sour, or if they lose one hit-

ter—that's it. It's all over. We lost Don Gullett for two months last year, and we still finished champs."

"'Awesome' is the word for it,"
Joe Morgan says, nodding. "When
we're playing right, we're simply
awesome."

I came to Cincinnati expecting the worst. From everything I had heard and read about the Reds, I half expected to find a bunch of Neo-Fascists goose-stepping about, and shouting the kind of banal All-American cliches that novelist Sinclair Lewis called "Boosterisms." Certainly the Boston Red Sox became the darlings of the last World Series because compared to the Reds they seemed loose, boyish and eager. Oh, compare the nicknames "Bo-Sox" and "The Big Red Machine," and what do you come up with? Men Vs. Machine! Not hard to make a choice there. Then there is the matter of individual personalities. When I used to live in Oxford, Ohio, Pete Rose was especially hated by the more liberal sports fans, who regarded him as the ultimate "hot dog." Be-

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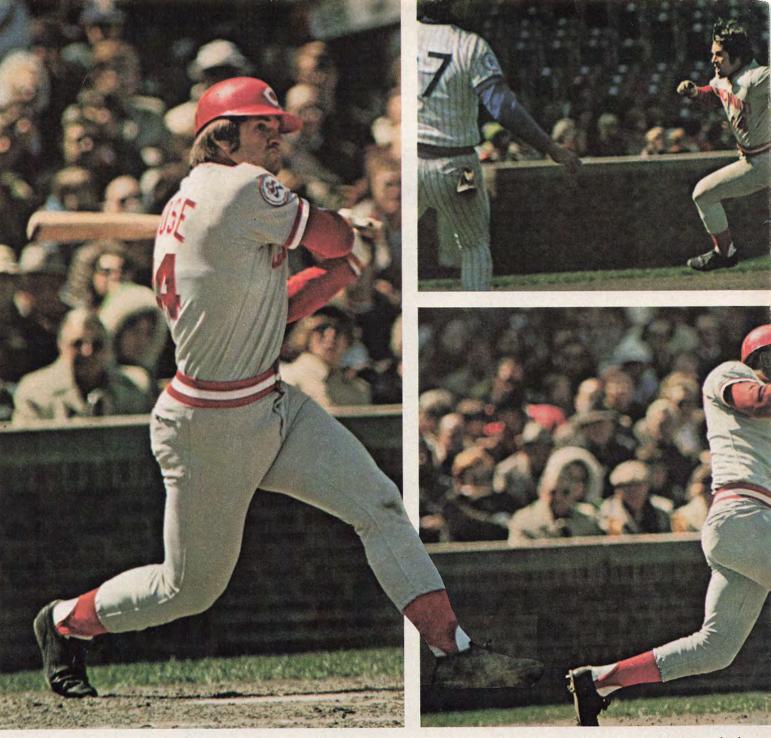
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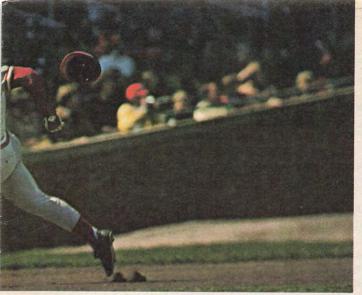


# Or Beyond

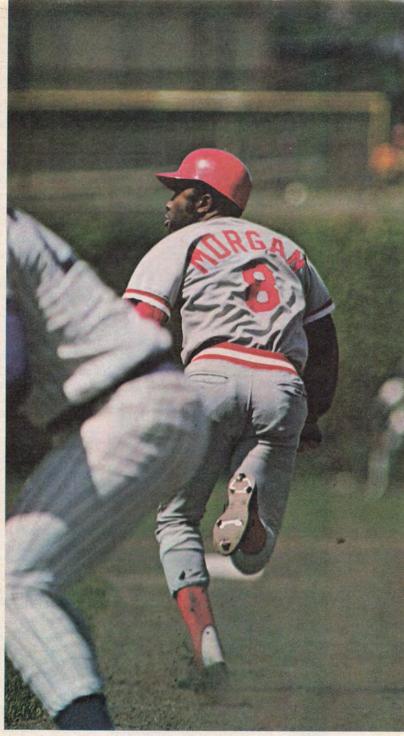
fore I ever saw a Reds game I kept hearing friends describe how Rose "pretended" to fall into walls, how he ran out walks for effect, how he insisted on wearing a crewcut (this was in 1968, mind you, when long hair suggested freedom, sexuality and the spirit of revolution), how he parroted whatever the Reds' front office programmed him to say. And then there was Joe Morgan. Recent interviews with Morgan have emphasized his arrogance, his massive egotism. As my plane came down in Newport, Ky., I had a vision of meeting the two Super Reds in which they locked me in the clubhouse, tied me up with old sanitary hose, then jointly shouted at me about the glories of The Team.

I am having lunch with Pete Rose at Johnny Bench's Cincinnati res-

taurant, The Home Plate. Rose had spent the entire morning at Pogue's Department Store signing a picture book entitled *The Relentless Reds*. The lines had been long, filled with mothers with babies, grandmothers with grandchildren, fathers with sons, and some middle-aged women in leisure suits who just walked by and stared at Rose as if he were the very reincarnation of Zeus. Now, as we find our table in Bench's, Rose says, "Did you see that one girl? Boy!"







Rose is referring to a blackhaired, big-breasted girl who approached him after the signing. Behind her was an overweight man with a yellow "BIG CAT" hat on.

"Pete Rose?" she had said. "You're my hero!"

Rose had smiled and looked at the unhappy CAT behind her.

"I am?" he said. "Well then who's he?"

"Oh him?" the girl said. "He's just my husband."

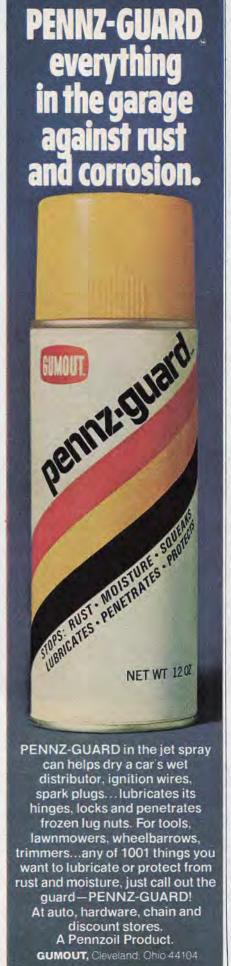
the waitress, who smiles and swivels over to the table. "Need a salad and some iced tea," Rose says. "Maybe some pork chops too. They better be good because Johnny never comes to my restaurant. Ha. Ha!"

Pete then grows serious, reflecting on the morning. "Can't do too many of these personal appearances," he says. "It might take your mind off the game. I figure everything I have, everything I am Now Rose sits down and winks at comes from baseball. And so I owe

Author Ward expected to be put off by the enthusiasm and confidence of Rose and Morgan; instead, he was turned on.

it to myself, the club and the fans to put out a hundred percent. The thing that has always been my strong point is my body. I'm never tired . . . or I haven't been. But that's no longer the way it is. I'm thirty-five now. I don't have quite as much stamina, so I have to rest a little more. Got to be careful."

A moment later he is eating a small tossed salad, and talking



## Or Beyond

about hitting: "What makes you a good hitter . . . is really the same thing that makes the Reds a good team. It's aggressiveness. You have to go up to the plate thinking you're going to hit the ball. You have to watch it all the way to the plate but especially when it comes right up near you. I mean, that may not sound like much—but it's very important. When the ball is here:"

Rose holds a hand about two feet from his chest.

"When it's here—that's when you must really look at it. A lot of guys will watch when the pitcher is winding up, watch the ball come out of his hand, watch it halfway up to the plate and then, as they start to swing, they blink, or take their eyes off of it. What good does it do me if I don't see what I'm hitting? You've got to remember the difference between hitting a ball well, and not hitting it at all is maybe this much:"

Rose holds his thumb and forefinger about half an inch apart.

He smiles and shakes his head. "Boy," he says. "I pulled a cool one out in Chicago the other day. I have this habit of watching the ball in the catcher's mitt. And I noticed that it had a black spot on it. Well, I didn't say anything, but on the next pitch I yelled, 'Hey, ump, that ball has a black spot on it.' The catcher and the ump both thought that I had seen the black spot as the ball went by me. Boy, it really shook them up. The ump said 'How the hell did you see that?' and I said, 'Hey, I can see Chub Feeney's name on the ball when it comes in.' It shook 'em up good. It helped destroy the pitcher's rhythm, and I got a homer.'

Rose laughs, and shakes his head, and I feel my resistance to him wearing away. Rose's words, set down in cold print, make him sound embarrassingly narcissistic. But in person, as one watches him chuckling, using such outdated teenaged slang as "I pulled a cool one," and laugh-

ing about his success, one can't help but like him. He seems strangely boyish, not at all 35, not at all the crew-cut goon my old college friends used to despise, but a big oversized kid who loves baseball, who genuinely believes that what he is doing is the greatest thing in the world. This enthusiasm for his own performance transcends mere egotism. Rather it's an infectious tonic for the whole team, for Rose is not only the ultimate hustler, but the ultimate team player.

"With all the stars we have on our team," he says, as the waitress brings us a delicious lobster soup, "we could all go our own way. I mean Bench, and Joe Morgan and Tony Perez-who, by the way is my best friend in the whole world-we could all go our own way, but we would be horses' asses to do it. Hell, we wouldn't be champs. Last year was the greatest thing that ever happened to any of us. You got your individual goals, sure. And I'm not trying to say, 'I only think of the team.' I know my hits and my RBIs and my sliding in head-first are going to earn me a good salary. But you can be satisfied by individual goals and money for only so long. You have to have that team victory to experience the greatest feeling.'

He looks at me with his eyes popping out. The man is sincere. That is the one thing I hadn't counted on. Sitting there in his blue-and-white striped Nik-Nik shirt, his skin-tight blue pants which reveal his tremendously muscular thighs, his white Italian loafers with the little plastic tassels on them . . . it is tempting to pass him off as some kind of secondrate L.A. Movie Stud. But, in Pete Rose's case, the clothes, however tacky chic, are not the man. For underneath the glossy threads there is still a kid in a dirty T-shirt, his first baseball glove hanging from a back pocket. It is easy to be skeptical as he talks about the Team, but it is impossible not to be convinced by the passion of his words.

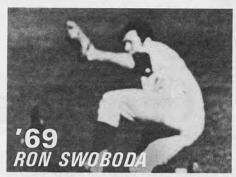
"You know how the old saying goes," Rose says as we start out the door, "that winning isn't the most important thing, it's the only thing?

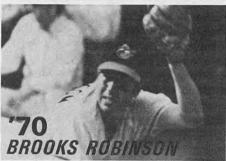
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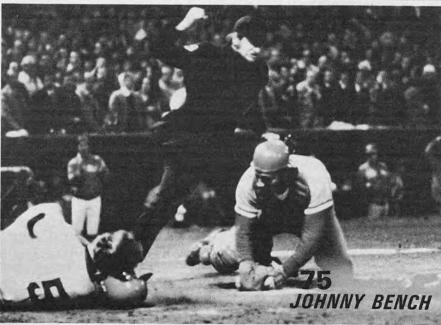














## Or Beyond

Well, I believe in that a hundred and ten percent, and I think the rest of the Reds do too. I mean, I hope they do! Anyone who doesn't wouldn't last long on our team. You try not running out a ball, and let Joe Morgan get on your tail. Hey, he'll shout at anybody, no matter how big a star the guy is. He'll do it in a way that makes you feel this big . . . and you won't forget it. We've got pride, you know?"

The Reds have just beaten the Mets and Mickey Lolich, 5-1, on a two-run homer by Johnny Bench. The Cincinnati clubhouse empties quickly, and I walk out with Joe Morgan, who is dressed in his blinding Mr. Disco Outfit-a pink shirt as thin as Kleenex, pink body pants as tight as Rose's, and white loafers with the obligatory tassels.

"I thought Lolich was going to pitch a no-hitter there for a while," I say, because Lolich had pitched a

no-hitter for six innings.

Morgan shakes his head and strides cockily along. "Not a chance," he says. "Nobody can pitch a no-hitter against this team. There's no breathing room for a pitcher. So he gets us out for four or five innings. Then he gets tired. Do you realize the psychological strain that a pitcher is up against when he is forced to go against a Joe Morgan, a Johnny Bench, a Tony Perez, a Pete Rose, a George Foster, a Dave Concepcion for the whole game? Like tonight. Mickey was dealing to us out there, getting the curve and sliders over the outside corner. But all he had to do was hang one curve to Bench, and that was it. Johnny pulls it out, and we're up two runs."

At the gate, a mob of kids swarm in. Morgan moves quickly through the crowd, signing autographs but not talking, not smiling, pressing determinedly on toward his car.

A few seconds later we are riding around the ramps inside the stadium; Morgan is a relaxed driver,

sitting back with one hand on the wheel, very much in control of the curvy shadowed tunnels.

"I've read you consider yourself

a complete player," I say.

Morgan nods. "That's right," he says. "Some people thought I was popping off for saying that, but I only meant it as a simple statement of fact. I happen to be short, not blessed with the great strength of a Pete Rose. I've got good power, and could hit thirty or thirty-five home runs a year if I wanted to . . . but my average would drop. And so I realized pretty early on that I would have to use my body intelligently. I've gotten better every year. There's not many players who can say that. I'm thirty-two years old now and I've been playing in the maiors for over twelve years, and I'm at my peak. I can hit for a good average, I can make the play in the field, I can steal.

"Most people think a man steals a base because he's fast. Well, I'm only the third-fastest man on this team, but I have a quickness. I mean, I'm going at top speed when I have taken one step. But more than that, I know exactly how much of a lead to get against every pitcher in the league. This is because I study them all; I started in sixty-eight, when I was still with Houston. I realized that with the new artificial turf, the bigger ballparks, speed and fielding and hitting for a good average . . . these would be the attributes that would be at a premium in the game of the future. So I consciously went out to improve all those aspects of my game.'

As we ride along, I find that I also have to alter my pre-conception of Morgan. His egotism does not offend me-largely because it's rooted in such a confidence that he may as well be talking about another player. It's as if he has objectively looked at himself, and decided that, yes he is the greatest in the league, and upon discovering the fact, is now enmeshed in a kind of interesting self-analysis to find out why. In short, while Rose and Morgan talk of themselves like the champions they are, there is no

sense that either of them is trying to implore you to believe them. "Yes, we are terrific," they seem to be saying. "So what else is new?"

Joe Morgan parks his lime-green Cadillac in the parking lot behind a big yellow building with the name Buster Brown's on it. He hops out, and strides toward the discotheque. looking for all the world like Superfly himself, striding cool, and cocky, moving through the air as if he had a special understanding with space. He fills it beautifully, elegantly, like a dancer. A man with a goatee looks at Morgan in awe. 'It's Joeeeee," he hisses.

Morgan doesn't acknowledge him, but does slap five with a woman who comes toward him. He smiles at her and keeps moving to-

ward the door.

"You see, there are few players who think about the game like I do," he says. "You'll never hear me doing any of that old Willie Mays Say Hey stuff. I'm a student of the game. And I'm a team player. That's something you'll find about all of our players, and I like to think the team leaders help make that spirit stay alive. Last year, for instance, when we wrapped things up early, that was very bad for me. I mean, I like the physical act of stealing bases, but I only really get a big thrill out of it if it helps us score a run we need. That's why I let down last year. There was no reason to play after we had whipped everyone.

We go through the glass doors and pass the Bouncer, who slaps Joe five. Inside, the disco is stuffed with men in body shirts and blowndried hair, girls in floral patterns and platform heels. Bubbles come from the ceiling, and a familiar Bowie recording starts chugging out of the monstrous stereo system: "Fame

Fammmme," the song wails.

"Let's glide around," Morgan says. "I'm looking for my lawyer and some other people.'

Glide he does, through the crowd, which parts like the Red Sea for the short Big Red machinist.

"That's Joe. . . ."



## Or Beyond

"Joe Morgan!"

"Fammmme. Fammmmme. Bapbagbapba dada."

Morgan glides up the steps and stops, turning on the balls of his feet as the eyes of a girl in a yellow backless Zelda gown go POP, as the nostrils of her dancing partner open, as the waitress' mouth smiles timidly at him. Morgan is just standing there, his own eyes scanning the horizon, ostensibly searching for his lawyer, but really seeing nothing but the other eyes looking in on him. Joe Morgan is here! He's the National League's MVP! Big Little Joe! Mr. Disco, who eyes the crowd like a Prince eyes his dominion!

He never did find his lawyer.

Pete Rose is driving Larry Craig, a Los Angeles-based promoter of the T-shirts bearing Rose's name, and me through a torrent toward Dayton. Rose is to spend three hours signing the T-shirts in Elder-Beerman's Department Store. The problem is that Pete Rose is tired, and he wants to spend no more than 90 minutes signing shirts.

"Pete," Larry Craig says, "you gotta do the whole three hours. You gotta, Pete. Listen, man, these Tshirts are heavy, real heavy!"

Rose's knuckles are getting white on the steering wheel of his Rolls Royce. He looks at the blown-dried Craig the way a gold prospector stares at a Gila Monster.

"I'm thirty-five and I'm dead tired," Rose says. "There's this matter of stamina, Larry. I'm tired right now, and it's only ten a.m. I got to sign T-shirts for three hours and I'm tireder, plus we have an hour ride back to Cincinnati. The game's at five-thirty. When am I gonna rest? Besides, the T-shirt lines never last for more than an hour and a half. Believe me, I've been doing this stuff for years."

"You've been advertised, Pete," Craig says. "You've been advertised for three hours. What am I gonna tell them if you walk out after an hour and a half?"

"I don't give a blank what you tell em," Rose says. "Your blanking Tshirts take off, but I bat two-thirty and let the team down!"

Larry Craig leans his Mr. Smooth-L.A.-tan face right next to Rose's. "This is a big promotion, Pete," Craig says. "I got Roger Staubach, I got Steve Garvey, I got Morgan. I got a Rolodex with forty thousand names on it, Pete!"

"Blank your Rolodex," says Pete, who perfunctorily signs Tshirts for 90 minutes, then leaves. It takes him 70 minutes to drive back to Cincinnati in the rain. That night he goes oh-for-four.

Joe Morgan is lying on the trainer's table with a leather harness around his jaw. The harness lifts his head up and then like some Frankenstein invention, twists the jaw a little, therapy for Morgan's pinched nerve. Even with the harness on, however, Little Joe can still talk faster than a speeding pencil, more powerful than Memorex.

'The Reds are the best team,' he says, "because we can beat you so many ways. We can run on you. Do you realize how fast Ken Griffey is? How quick Foster is? They both hit three hundred last year. And again, I have to emphasize our pitching staff. Look at it. We've got Gary Nolan, we've got Jack Billingham, we've got Don Gullett, who can not only pitch but hit. Tell me that we don't have a good staff. And now we've got Rawly Eastwick, and two really good young pitchers, Pat Zachry, and Santo Alcala. This is a great staff."

I smile and wander into the locker room where Pete Rose seems to have gotten over his autograph blues. He wants to talk about the Reds again:

"You know personally," Rose says, "personally . . . they say I could have made more money playing in New York. Sure I could have had more endorsements, but would

had more endorsements, but would I have been as good a player? Would I have the statistics I have now? It's pretty hard to get two hundred hits a year unless you get to bat seven hundred times. And you would never get to the plate that many times playing for the Mets. So in spite of your individual goals, part of what you accomplish, a large part of it, is made possible by the team. I think a lot of people forget that. We're a complete team."

I feel as though I am in the Land of Pollyanna. Somebody on the Reds must feel a little disgruntled! When Rose leaves the locker room for a minute, I ask young infielder Doug Flynn how he feels about the Reds.

"Greatest team in baseball," Flynn says.

I nod, and go ask Rawly Eastwick, who voices more of the same. It's getting a bit maddening.

Rose, suiting up at his locker, says, "Even the bottom of our lineup is terrific. Right now I've got almost as many RBIs as Morgan, so what does that tell you about the bottom of our lineup?"

Morgan, whose locker is next to Rose's, sits down and says, "It's up to us. We have the best mental attitudes around, as well as the greatest talents. Did I show you this?"

He opens up a notebook, with writing in it.

"After every game I sit here and write down any mistakes I made," he says." I sit and think of myself doing the same thing, but correctly. It helps me tremendously."

Morgan goes on a while more about the Reds and I stop listening. But in the game that follows, when I watch Morgan steal on Seaver, watch Tony Perez and Dan Driessen pull a double steal, and watch 23-year-old Alcala throw a four-hitter to beat Seaver and win his second game-I have trouble doubting the truth underlying the Kiwanis Club optimism of Morgan and Rose and the rest of the Reds. They might sound like a broken record, but you have to think that the records they break will reside in the win column. Besides all the physical talent on this team, the Reds have Rose and Morgan, whose spirit I thought I'd find outrageous. Instead, I have found it contagious.

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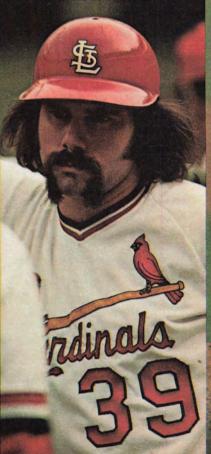
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# The Mad Hungarian Has A Wonderful Act: CELLUSI WANNED TO BINE THE BIRD'S HEAD OFF 33

BY LARRY GRUBMAN

he day before a game between the St. Louis Cardinals and the Chicago Cubs last season, Chicago broadcaster Jack Brickhouse aired an interview he'd done with Cardinal relief pitcher Al Hrabosky. Hrabosky, who calls himself The Mad Hungarian, called the Cubs a bunch of "teddy bears," and announced that he'd say it to the players' faces. "I really don't give a damn what the Cubs or their fans think of me," he said. "In fact, I hope they hate me."

The next day the "teddy bears" beat Hrabosky and the Cardinals, 4-3. Hrabosky swore to get revenge when the Cardinals next came to Chicago.

Cardinal relief pitcher Al Hrabosky builds an intense hatred—what he calls a "controlled rage"—against every hitter. By that next trip Hrabosky had forgotten the Brickhouse interview. Cub fans had not. As he sat in the bullpen, they pungently reminded The Mad Hungarian of his failures and belittled his boasts.

Finally, one Cub fan decided to test the ferocity of The Mad Hungarian. Holding a finger to his lips to tell people around him not to give him away, the man leaned over the bullpen railing and placed a live cockatoo on Hrabosky's head.

The Mad Hungarian reacted instantly. He reached up, grabbed the bird and swung it around by its neck. Then he smiled sardonically at the bird's owner.

Cardinal players jumped up and, after much effort, convinced Hrabosky to give the bird back in one piece. "Why did you stop me?" Hrabosky asked his teammates later. "I just wanted to bite the bird's head off and throw the body back in the stands."

When he pulls on Cardinal uniform number 39, Al Hrabosky *looks* like a guy who would bite the head off a bird. He's a stocky, five-foot-11, 180-pounder with slitted eyes, grimly pursed lips, long brown hair that flies in all directions from under his cap, and an enormous Fu Manchu moustache which makes him resemble a menacing Mongol warrior.

Hrabosky looks mad and acts mad. He does everything he can think of to make opponents hate him. He loves to take the mound in crucial situations, yearns for each appearance to be a dramatic confrontation. If it were up to him, his entrances would be signaled by eerie organ music and scores of vultures circling the batter's box.

Once he reaches the mound, he turns his back to the plate and feverishly builds an intense hatred for the hitter whom he's about to face. The Mad Hungarian calls it "controlled rage," which is not merely the outlet for Al Hrabosky's frustrations—but the fire that fuels his fastball.

"I gradually intensify my concentration," he explains. "I think about what the hitter has done against me in the past. I think about the way I've been treated in his city. Then, I remember all of my frustrations. Once I establish hate for the hitter, I concentrate on the situation and how I'm going to destroy him in our one-on-one contest."

When The Mad Hungarian concentrates, no one can disturb him, not a teammate, not a hitter, not an umpire.

Joe Torre, playing third for the Cardinals two years ago, approached The Mad Hungarian on the mound. Torre was stopped in mid-stride. "Wait a minute," Hrabosky said. "If you want to stand on the mound, you'll have to ask me first. It's my mound."

In an important game near the end of the 1974 season, Bill Mad-



CONTINUED

lock of the Cubs tried to test The Mad Hungarian's patience. Every time Hrabosky was about to pitch, Madlock stepped out of the batter's box. Fed up with the delays, homeplate umpire Shag Crawford ordered Hrabosky to pitch. Madlock watched from outside the batter's box as a called-strike zipped by.



By closely observing former Cardinal Bob Gibson, Hrabosky learned the fine art of intimidation from the mound.

Madlock argued. Cubs manager Jim Marshall rushed to join the argument. On-deck hitter Jose Cardenal also crowded in at the plate.

Hrabosky was delighted by the scene. So delighted that he decided to take full advantage of it. He threw another pitch scattering the crowd. Instantly both benches emptied. A wild free-for-all followed. And Bill Madlock learned that it's not wise to fool with The Mad Hungarian. "He gets you so mad, he just

whizzes the ball right by before you know it," says Madlock. "I wish he was ours."

Umpires have learned to be patient with Hrabosky, because for the most part he works quickly. "I've only been warned once or twice about my time between pitches," he says. "The umps know that I only go through my psyching routine when I'm in a tight spot. I think by now they know about The Mad Hungarian."

When he's finally ready to deliver a pitch, The Mad Hungarian is at his maddest, most intimidating. His shoulders hunched, he nods at his catcher, spins on his left foot and kicks his right leg toward the plate. He waves his glove in front of his face like a shield so that it isn't until at the very last moment—just before Hrabosky releases the fastball with his left hand—that the hitter sees the hatred in The Mad Hungarian's eyes.

Although he has a good forkball, almost every Hrabosky pitch is a fastball. "It puts extra fear in the mind of the hitter," he says. "It makes him easier to destroy."

Hrabosky says, however, that he refuses to he held accountable for his actions in a game. "Maybe I'm schizophrenic," he suggests. "When I'm on the mound, I'm a completely different person. I'm not Al Hrabosky. I'm The Mad Hungarian."

The Mad Hungarian was "born" during a game in Los Angeles on June 11, 1974. With the Cardinals leading 1-0, two outs and two Dodgers on base in the bottom of the ninth, Al Hrabosky was summoned from the bullpen. The Cardinals were fighting for first place in their division. Hrabosky, a mainstay of the St. Louis bullpen in 1973, had gotten off to such a miserable start in 1974 that the Cardinals had considered sending him to the minors. Now he needed an out, but his fastball had not been moving well in the warmup.

For the first time in his career, Al Hrabosky turned his back on the mound between each pitch and

went through his hate-building psyching ritual. And then he struck out Dodger pinch-hitter Tom Paciorek.

"It was no contest," said Angel Figueroa, the scout who'd helped the Cardinals sign Al Hrabosky, and who'd been in the stands watching that game. "Three perfect moving fastballs."

"I only remember one important thing about that game," Hrabosky says. "I learned that by going through my psyching routine I could make a hitter think my fastball was moving better than it really was."

Prior to the emergence of The Mad Hungarian, Al Hrabosky describes his life as a series of frustrations. Hrabosky, who was born July 21, 1949, failed three Little League baseball tryouts while living in Oakland, Calif. When his family moved to Anaheim, Calif., he couldn't make his eighth-grade baseball team. Illness in ninth grade and a double hernia operation in tenth grade limited his efforts to play baseball. Even worse, the physical problems often kept him from his real love—football.

"Football was my sport," he recalls. "I was a linebacker and a running back, and probably the meanest man ever to play the game. I loved to inflict pain, make the late hit, really make people fear me."

He finally got to play varsity baseball in his junior year at Anaheim's Savanna High School, as an outfielder-first baseman. He wanted to pitch, especially after an injury cost him his starting spot in the outfield, but the chance to pitch regularly didn't come until the next year, when Jim Reach took over the baseball team.

As a senior, Hrabosky was injured during football season, but he was healthy when the baseball season opened. He pitched Savanna to a league championship, then accepted a scholarship to Fullerton (Calif.) Junior College.

"Al lacked the polish of some of my other kids," Fullerton coach Mike Sgobba recalls. "But he had that great concentration. Some-

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# HIBAD

CONTINUED

times he was *too* intense. We used to kid him about fielding bunts. He'd charge the ball and pounce on it like he was going to crush it. Then he'd pick it up and throw it into the outfield."

Sgobba lectured Hrabosky on the mental aspects of pitching, and Al was much better than his 6-3 record in 1968. So much so that the Cardinals made Hrabosky their first pick in the January, 1969, free-agent draft. After an 8-2 record in his second year at Fullerton, Hrabosky signed with the Cardinals.

He was impressive as a starter in his first two pro seasons and, in mid-June, 1970, the Cardinals called him up to the major leagues. They gave him a cushion, a spot at the end of the bullpen bench and a lesson in patience.

"It was like they'd said, 'We know you're here, but why did we bring you here?' "Hrabosky says. He didn't even know how to properly warm up in the bullpen. He decided to learn as much as he could as long as he was in the major leagues.

He studied Bob Gibson, the Cardinals' great pitcher who won the Cy Young award that year. Hrabosky observed that Gibson scowled at hitters and then challenged them to touch his under-thechin fastball. He also saw that certain hitters were visibly shaken when Gibson pitched, that he intimidated them. Hrabosky also watched the hitters. He saw that when Willie Stargell of the Pittsburgh Pirates stepped to the plate, some pitchers shivered on the mound. Hrabosky swore then that he'd never be intimidated by a hitter. "I learned my first lesson in the major leagues," he says. "Be an intimidator!"

Army Reserve duty cost him six weeks of the 1971 season. Then he reported to the Cardinals' AAA team in Tulsa, Okla., where his career almost came to a halt.

Warren Spahn, the manager at-Tulsa, wanted to work on Hrabosky's breaking pitches. For some unfathomable reason, Spahn decided to have the young lefty throw on the sidelines ten days in a row.

"My back was killing me," Hrabosky remembers. "After six months in the Army, I was in no shape to go ten straight days."

And on the 11th day Spahn demeaned Hrabosky in front of the entire team, saying that Al would never make it back to the major leagues. Hrabosky was sent down to the Cardinals' AA club in Arkansas. The team won the pennant, but Hrabosky contributed little and refused to wear the ring he was given. "I didn't feel like part of the team," he says. "I wanted out of baseball."

Hrabosky remembers the conversations he had back then with his wife Dee, a sensitive woman who'd been with him at Savanna High and Fullerton before they'd married in January, 1970. "She'd say, 'Maybe you're not the really strong guy you think you are, maybe you should quit." She was using reverse psychology, and it worked. After that I was more determined to make it back to the majors."

Hrabosky pitched for Guasave in the Mexican League that winter and led his team to the championship. He became an instant hero. Fans called him "El Cordobes," in honor of the illustrious bullfighter. Everyone in Guasave knew him. He joined the local police on their night rounds and in many off-hours spent his time with the children there, eating with them, buying them clothes, playing baseball with them.

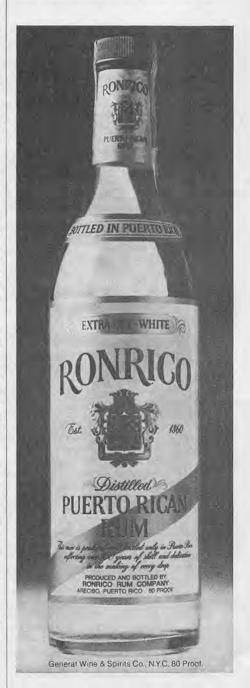
In Guasave, he also previewed his act as The Mad Hungarian. During the league playoffs, Hrabosky set off fireworks in front of the dugout each time Guasave scored. When the umpires ordered him to stop, he passed the rockets to friends in the stands.

Still, despite the confidence he'd restored in Mexico, Hrabosky needed a sponsor in the Cardinals,

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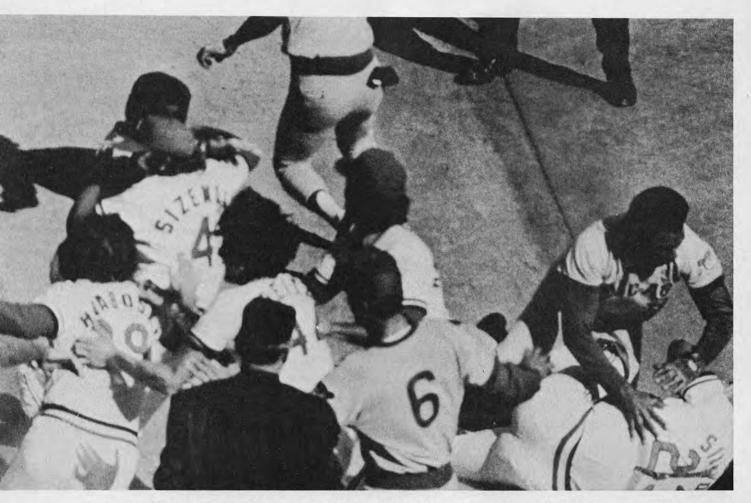
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# HBAD

CONTINUED

organization to help him make it back to the major leagues. When he reported to the Cardinals' Arkansas AA club in the spring of 1972, he found his sponsor in manager Fred Koenig.

"Fred gave me the ball and said, 'Here, show me how you pitched when the Cardinals thought enough of you to make you a first draft choice," Hrabosky recalls. "He didn't try to change my pitching style like some other people in the organization had tried. He made me feel comfortable again."

Although Hrabosky had a 7-12 record in 1972, Koenig boosted him to Cardinals' management as a relief pitcher. And in June, 1973, the

Cardinals recalled Hrabosky and discovered that Koenig was right. In 44 relief appearances that year Al had a 2.09 ERA and 57 strikeouts in 56 innings.

Still, his future with the Cardinals was not secure. A notoriously slow starter, Hrabosky began the 1974 season by giving up nine earned runs in his first eight innings. He followed that with 12 ½ innings of scoreless pitching—then gave up nine runs in his next 14 innings. The Cardinals were ready to give up on him. Then his teammates rallied behind Hrabosky.

Ted Simmons, the Cardinals' catcher, told management to get off Al's back. "He's been in slumps before," Simmons said. "He's tough enough to get out of this one."

Lou Brock took aside Hrabosky in Montreal and said, "Throw like you did when you got people out in the minors, when you first impressed the Cardinals. Even if you

In this 1974 game against the Cubs, Hrabosky's irritating manner so upset Bill Madlock that a free-for-all ensued.

throw the first pitch over the backstop, go out there and really let go."

It was at this time on June 11, 1974, that Al Hrabosky entered that game against the Dodgers and became The Mad Hungarian. That was the turning point in his career.

Some weeks later, at the All-Star break, Hrabosky grew his Fu Manchu to enhance his new intimidating image. And from July 14th to September 19th—through 41 ½ innings and 27 appearances—he allowed just 15 hits and one earned run. He struck out 44, won five games and saved six. He finished 1974 with an 8-1 record, nine of the club's 20 saves and a 2.97 ERA.

The next season, 1975, was Hrabosky's best. He led the National League in winning percentage (.813) with a 13-3 record, and was tied with Rawly Eastwick of Cincin-



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That's what's so great about our diamond. It reminds us that finding each other was only the beginning.



#### HIMID

CONTINUED

nati for the league lead in saves with 22. His earned-run average of 1.67 topped all left-handers, and was second-best among all pitchers over the full season. His overall performance earned him the league's "Fireman of the Year" award.

After complaining that he felt miserable during this year's short exhibition season, Hrabosky got off to his usual slow start in the league competition. In his first three innings he gave up three earned runs. He gave up just one earned run in his next 20 innings, but then allowed nine earned runs in his next ten innings. By June 1st, he had a 3-4 record, four saves and a 3.05 ERA.

It is not surprising that, as Cardinal public relations director Jerry Lovelace says, "There's no doubt that The Mad Hungarian has become one of the most popular players ever in St. Louis."

At a typical Cardinals home game there might be ten cars in the Busch Stadium parking lot that don't have "I Hlove Hrabosky" bumper stickers. There are Mad Hungarian Tshirts and autographed baseballs, and if there were Mad Hungarian moustaches, every Little League pitcher in St. Louis would wear a Fu Manchu.

When Dodgers manager Walter Alston left Hrabosky off the 1975 National League All-Star team, St. Louis fans demonstrated their support of The Mad Hungarian at Hrabosky Hbanner Day. More than 31,000 people turned out at Busch Stadium to honor the snubbed reliever. "Hgee, Hgolly, Hgosh and Hgloryosky, How Could Alston Not Pick Hrabosky?" read one banner. "Alstonoutsky. We Want Hrabosky," implored another. And there was this biting message for the Dodgers' manager: "Smog Is Not The Densest Thing In L.A.'

Hrabosky won the game that day,

beating the Dodgers and Alston 2-1, and afterward, he said, "That game gave me probably the most rewarding feeling I've ever had—to look up and see so many people supporting me. Even if I'd gone to Milwaukee [for the All-Star Game], there's no way I could feel as good as I do now."

He beat the Dodgers again the following day, then defeated them a third straight time nine days later in Los Angeles. Now he says, "I think Walter Alston knows me."

"He's incredible," publicist Jerry Lovelace says. "He's got a pre-season sports call-in show that's a big hit on KMOX radio. He spends a lot of time with youth groups and charities—everything from Little League to 'Save the Cats,' a local fund for animals. The people in St. Louis can't get enough of The Mad Hungarian."

Last November Hrabosky delighted a Sunday afternoon audience at the St. Louis Symphony with his narration of Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf, which included a new part for a character called—naturally—The Mad Hungarian.

While he loves to be loved at home, on the road Hrabosky loves to be hated. Fans in National League cities have satisfied his craving for abuse. And the more he's booed, the madder and more effective he becomes. He knows he's got a very good act.

Not long ago, at his home in St. Louis, Hrabosky was busily engaged in signing 18 dozen souvenir baseballs while his four-year-old daughter Lisa watched Sesame Street with her mother. Abruptly Lisa turned away from the television set and said, "Mommy, I want a cat."

Dee glanced at her husband signing baseballs and said, "Lisa, I don't think Daddy would like a cat in our new house."

"Oh, cats are okay," Al Hrabosky said without looking up. "To kill!"

Then the Mad Hungarian winked and laughed about his very good act.





still there, Dave?"
Silence.

For three minutes I've been on the line and he hasn't said a word. All he said was unnph when he first picked up the phone. I keep pausing so he can say something, anything, but he says nothing. The only sound I keep hearing is that faint, little tinkling you get over the long-distance line. Maybe he's fallen asleep. Maybe he's gone to the bathroom. Or maybe he's suddenly become engrossed in the small pocket Bible he carries with him everywhere for instant guidance and inspiration, if not always salvation. Maybe, God forbid, he's died on

"Hello, Dave?"

Silence.

Dave Kingman is-or was-in a Montreal hotel room awaiting the start of a three-game series with the Expos, and I'm calling to request an interview. At this particular point in time Kingman, the 27-year-old slugging outfielder for the New York Mets, is hitting more home runs and hitting them a lot farther than anyone else in baseball, except for arch-rival Mike Schmidt of Philadelphia with whom he is tied with 15 home runs. Schmidt edged him out last season for the homerun title in the majors, hitting 38 homers to Kingman's 36. Kingman also has 35 RBIs, also tops—and four more than Schmidt in second spot. Kingman's done all this in a mere 37 games, which explains why he's come to be called Sky King, Lord of Longball and The Towering Inferno, the latter more for his height (six-foot-six) than the length of some of his drives (600 to 700 feet). If he keeps hitting home runs at this pace, he'll wind up with around 75 and it'll be very hard to talk glowingly about Ruth or Maris anymore.

Trouble is, he might not keep hitting home runs at this pace. He strikes out too much. In fact, he strikes out more than anybody else in the majors. Right now he's leading both leagues with 40, which is why he's also come to be called Super Whiff and Puff, names that hurt more than a little bit and part reason, some suggest, why he's the keeper of one of baseball's most complex psyches, often dark and troubled, a psyche that turns him into a brooding giant who retreats sullenly into a shell when he's not hitting and barely emerges even when he is.

Kingman lives alone in a new house he bought for himself in Connecticut, spending his days listening to music on his eight-track stereo when he's not playing baseball, or reading the Bible, something he's done since he was a child, but has intensified since joining the Fellowship of Christian Athletes a few

vears ago. On road trips, Kingman rooms alone, a request made and granted and for reasons he refuses to divulge. He often eats alone on road trips and, when he doesn't, he might as well because he doesn't say much anyway. He doesn't like reporters asking him anything more personal than his age, weight and place of birth. He refuses to give his home phone number to anyone but closest loved ones and that usually means relatives because he claims he has no intimate friends except for one: God. Naturally, Dave Kingman has spawned more lockerroom shrinks than probably any other ballplayer, two of whom are Charlie Fox and Bobby Bonds, his former manager and teammate, respectively, when he played for the San Francisco Giants.

"Yes," says Charlie Fox, now scouting for the Montreal Expos, "Dave is, uh, different; yes, he's difficult to figure out at times, uhhuh."

"It is not advisable to talk to Dave after he's had a bad game," says Bobby Bonds, now with the California Angels, "That's for sure."

But Dave's last game was not a bad one. Although the Mets lost, 5-3, to the Phillies, Kingman had two hits, including a home run.

This is getting ridiculous.

"I thought maybe we could talk, Dave, you know, at your convenience."

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#### Kingman

Silence.

"I could be there tomorrow morning, you don't play until the evening, maybe we could talk over breakfast."

Silence.

"It's just that, well, people are interested in you Dave, er, I mean not you so much, but your playing, you know what I mean?"

Silence.

"Hello, operator!" Click, click. "Have I been cut off or something? Hello, op—"

"Unnph."

"Dave?"

"Unnph."

"Pardon?"

"Yeah! I'm still here, I'm still here. Look, is this gonna be some goddam thing putting me up against Schmidt? Because if it is, forget it. Another magazine guy told me he was gonna do a piece on me and it turned out to be all on Schmidt with just little bits on me here and there. Schmidt even got on the cover!"

"Just you, Dave, just you."

Silence. "Well, uh, okay. Okay, see me at ten in the morning for breakfast. Call my room." Click.

I fly to Montreal, check into the same hotel and call his room at ten. He's not there. He's not there at 11 either. Or 12. Or one. I leave a message and go to my room to wait. He doesn't call. I go to the game in the evening at Jarry Park. Kingman lives! A buzz goes through the crowd when he steps into the ondeck circle. He puts the metal doughnut on his yard-long, 36ounce Louisville Slugger S-2, swings it three times around his head, adjusts his helmet, shrugs his shoulders, wipes his nose, adjusts his helmet, taps his cleats, kicks the dirt, pulls up his pants, makes a face, pulls up his pants, makes a fast and furtive cup adjustment and goes up to bat. All arms and legs, he stands as if he's astride an invisible horse. His neck sticks out and he

looks not unlike an ostrich. He smacks the second pitch to shortstop Tim Foli—a powerful drive that Foli bobbles—runs like an egg beater to first base, but not in time. The crowd roars. Kingman skulks to the dugout.

It's a bad night for Sky King: The Mets win 4-1 but Kingman grounds out twice and pops up once. I find him in the trainer's room after the game, sitting naked on the edge of a table, arms crossed, his head bowed as if in silent atonement for his grievous effort. "Dave?" He doesn't look up. I introduce myself and extend my hand. A big hand floats out from his side in a cold, dead handshake. "Dave, I was—"

"Not now," he snaps, eyes downcast. "I can't talk now."

"How about back at the hotel later?"

His head jerks up, his eyes wide. "The hotel? No way. I never talk at

the hotel. It's a policy of mine."

"Well-"

"Meet me here at ten in the morning. I'll be here."

A teammate, a pitcher, sidles up to me as I leave. "Don't be upset," he whispers. "He'll be okay. He's like that after a game like this. We just let him alone for awhile."

Kingman's not at the park at ten the next morning. Nor at 11. I take a cab back to the hotel and find him sitting with a girl in the coffee shop. "Noon," he snaps. "Noon at the park." He turns back to the girl.

I go to my room and phone Bobby Bonds for guidance. Bobby Bonds chuckles. "He must have had a bad game, right? I knew it. All I can say is pray, pray that he has a good game today." I pray he has a good game today, almost tempted to read from the Bible in my room.

Noon at the park. "I'm playing cards," he says officiously. "Take a



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#### Kingman

seat, I'll be with you later." I take a seat and watch him playing cards with Joe Torre and Del Unser. He's sitting in long, white underwear and I'm immediately intrigued as to why he hits so awesomely. He doesn't look that strong. He weighs 210 pounds but he looks lighter. His skin is pale, almost pasty in places. I study the famous arms: Long, lightly tanned and freckled, certainly not muscled in the classic sense. Even the wrists are nothing to rave about. But the hands are impressive, big and bony. It's hard to believe, looking at those arms, that they swung a bat that sent a ball 600 feet over the fence at Wrigley Field early this season, hitting a house three streets over. Or that they powered a ball 700 feet out of the park in spring training, a Catfish Hunter pitch, causing Mickey Mantle to exclaim: "That's the longest home run I've ever seen!"

Maybe the power is in the shoulders. But Joe Torre has better-looking shoulders and so has Del Unser and neither can hit homers like Kingman. The only thing Kingman has that's better looking than most of the players in the room is his face—but it can't be that. It must be technique, plain and simple.

"We can talk now," he says, pulling up a stool. "What do you want to know?" He folds his arms, bows his head, tightens his jaw. A little muscle is pulsating on the side of his jaw; it is very unsettling. "Yes, uh, what is the secret of hitting home runs?" His shoulders shrug, "Long arms. Leverage. Good eyes. I get them checked once a year and I always keep my contact lenses clean. I think that was one of my problems in San Francisco, why I had slumps. Candlestick Park is very windy and dusty and my contact lenses kept getting dirty and it affected my vision.

'People say you're moody, hard to fathom."

The muscle throbs. "I don't care what they say. Maybe I was in San Francisco. I'll admit I was confused there, I had problems. My confidence was damaged there. In four years, I was bumped all over the place. I never knew what the hell they wanted. I don't want to talk anymore about San Francisco."

'People have said you're, you know, insecure."

His face reddens, he shifts nervously. "I'm not insecure. I know who I am now, where I'm going. Maybe in San Francisco, but who wouldn't be the way I was treated there?"

Kingman's treatment with the Giants was, indeed, strange. He could hit the ball like nobody else-when he wasn't striking out. The Giants liked him for his hitting power but little else. They tried him at first, third and the outfield but he made too many errors. So he spent a lot of time on the bench. The reason was simple: Kingman was a pitcher and always had been. He was a pitcher in public school, high school and his first year at the University of Southern California. Not only was he a' pitcher, he was a superb pitcher. But his USC coach, Rod Dedeaux, converted him to an outfielder for his final two years at school.

'Dave could have been a great pitcher in the majors," says Dedeaux, "but I knew he could be a superstar as a slugger. He had great strength, he could really hit. He had a great throwing arm. Pitchers only get to play every four days or so but outfielders play every game. If he was going to be a superstar slugger, he had to play every game, that's where his value lay, so we converted him. He didn't like it. Not at all. It's like turning O.J. Simpson

into a lineman."

Kingman's bat, however, overshadowed his deficiencies in the outfield and in 1970, the Giants drafted him. The Giants wanted fire power. They sent him to the minors for two seasons (Amarillo and Phoenix) and his bat continued to sizzle. His fielding more or less fizzled. But the Giants called him up in July, 1971. In 41 games, he batted .278. He hit six homers, two triples and ten doubles. He had four homers, one triple and two doubles before he got his first single in the 11th game. It was a Kingman home run in the final game of the 1971 season against San Diego that clinched the divisional title for the Giants, edging out the Dodgers. In 1972, Kingman played in 135 games. He hit 29 homers, 17 doubles and four triples. But his average was only .225. When he wasn't hitting home runs, doubles and triples he was striking out. It soon became apparent that Dave Kingman's late conversion from pitcher to outfielder had become a curse. To hit regularly and consistently, he had to play—but where to play him when there were others who could play the positions better? Kingman was sent to winter ball to develop as a third baseman but was so terrible, he was sent home.

"It was a nightmare for Dave in San Francisco," says Rod Dedeaux. "He felt he didn't belong and Dave is a sensitive boy who has



a need to belong, to be wanted. In retrospect, I think he didn't have time to adjust to a new position so late in his development. Unfortunately, or fortunately, he could hit like nobody's business. And that's what the Giants wanted. But the Giants is not USC, let's face it. I still have dreams of him being the next DiMaggio, though."

The final humiliation for Dave Kingman came in 1974. In 121 games, he had only 78 hits. The power was still there, he always had that: 18 doubles, two triples. He had 55 RBIs and eight stolen bases. But his average was a lowly .223. He played 91 games at first, 21 at third and two in the outfield. He played seven games as a pinch-hitter/runner. And he spent 41 games on the bench.

"I like Dave," says Bobby Bonds, "but it was a bad time for him. He tried hard to adjust but, if he made mistakes, he'd try harder, put all that pressure on himself to impress management more the next time and it seemed he'd get himself into a worse box. He got down on himself and people around him. You couldn't criticize him. He couldn't accept that. He'd go days without talking. He was impossible to communicate with when he was in a slump. He was sort of immature in a way, sort of insecure. If management got on him, I can remember him saying 'Why are they always picking on me? Why don't they leave me alone? I'm getting away from this place.' Dave has to feel secure, he has to be needed, it's something in him. Who knows why?"

'There is a distance to him all right," says Rod Dedeaux. "But it's not arrogance. His confidence is very delicate, there's a need for stroking, more so than in a lot of

people.

Kingman is very conscious of his size and strength. He has an almost obsessive need to live up to it, or others' expectations of it. The root of Kingman's esteem is in his power

"Is it really all that goddamn important what I do?" says Dave Kingman. "I'm not some god, yet people look up to me."



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SHULTON

#### Kingman

and his power is manifested in his great ability to hit a baseball better than anybody else. If he suddenly can't hit a baseball properly anymore, his ego withers. "We were playing this celebrity game once," recalls Dedeaux, "and this comedian was hamming around on third, running back and forth between second and third. Dave was at bat and he turned to me and said 'Gee, coach, maybe I shouldn't hit, if I

ever hit him with the ball, I'll kill him.' I don't think anyone else would have had that thought.''

Kingman's mother, Captola, a widow living in Chicago, says: "He came along too fast. Everybody was always comparing him to Ted Williams and Babe Ruth or Mickey Mantle. David is proud of his size, always has been, and he felt he couldn't let people down. His father, you know, his father meant so much to him."

Kingman's father, Arthur, died suddenly two years ago, a shock, his mother says, that affected him deeply then and likely still does. "David and his

dad were terribly close. David was our only son and he and his dad fished together, hunted together. His dad would get off work early to go see him play all through the years. When David was with the Giants, his dad would sometimes fly to where he was playing just to surprise him. He played for his dad more than anybody.

"If David seems moody or reticent today, it's probably because he's mis-read people or been misread. David was always a quiet boy, he gave us no concern. He attended church, he played sports. Suddenly he found himself in the limelight, everybody wanted to be his friend.

David has always trusted people, he's wanted to like people but he found that when things were going not so well for him, these so-called friends deserted him. It upset him a lot, I know. He's very wary now of people but with good reason. The less he gives of himself, the less there is to use against him."

Dave Kingman says the most important thing in his life today is not baseball but God. "I don't think of how many home runs I'm going to get," he says. "I don't even know how many I have, I don't keep track. If I go into a slump? That's fine. I can accept it now. Once I couldn't. I just don't understand all



this fuss over me, everybody bugging me. The New York fans are so avid sometimes, it gets sickening.

"Baseball is third on my list of priorities. First is my relationship to God, second is my family. Get in that I'm a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Give them a plug. People trying to find out how much you make, what you drive, it's sick. Everybody trying to outdo their neighbors. Why can't people just be nice, why can't they trust one another?

"I don't even care if you write a story about me. Is it really all that goddam important what I do? I'm not some god, yet people look up to me. Look, it's like a roller coaster, right? I'm at the top now but it's going to come down. Society is going to the dogs, that's what's important. Tuning in to God." He lifts his hands in frustration. "I just wish I was more outspoken, I wish I could bring myself to speak out. I wish people would realize that heroes are only human. I can fail. I've failed many times and I'll fail again but this time I know it and I can accept it. I just wish others would. Hitting a baseball is no big deal."

But hitting a baseball is a big deal, really the *only* deal for Dave Kingman who, those who know will tell you if they're honest,

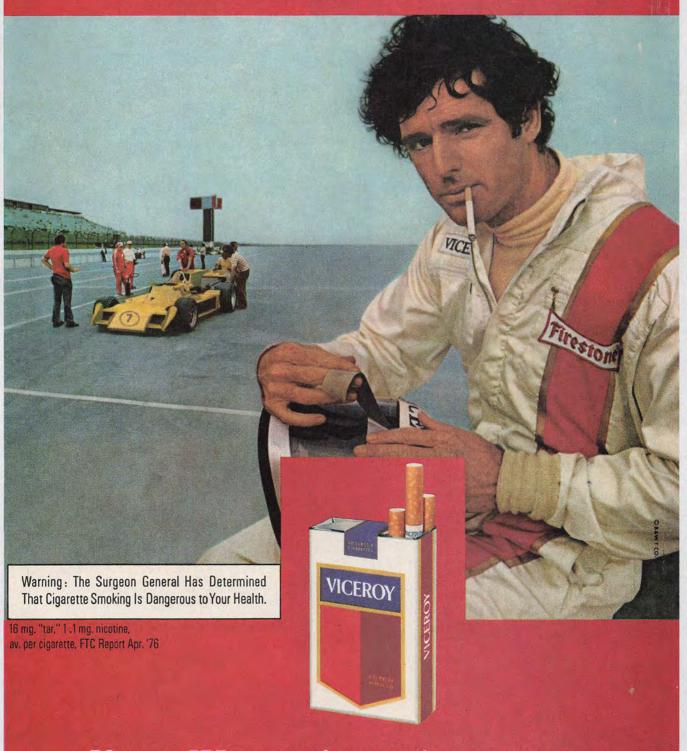
is only on the roster because of it. Always, in the back of his mind, is the knowledge that it's not really enough, that the magical, elusive gift might one day disappear for good and expose him for what he suspects he may truly be: A bogus prince. Mays could hit but he could do other things splendidly. The same with Mantle. And Williams. And Aaron. They were complete. Dave Kingman lives or dies by the bat-and the fans are unforgiving. A player of less formidable size and strength might be excused the loss of touch, the one great fear of the artist. He might be excused his humiliations.

Dave Kingman is not so favored.

In the final game against the Expos, he went hitless all five times at bat. He struck out twice; mighty, wild swings and the crowd roared its approval. On the last strikeout, he swung so hard, he fell to the ground in an awkward tangle—and the crowd howled with laughter. Suddenly, it was all so clear: Dave Kingman, to the fans, is a freak. A freak in a sideshow at a carnival. Step right up, step right up! See the funny man. Will he hit, will he miss? Step right up!

I'd planned to see Kingman again after the game. But I didn't bother. Somehow, it didn't seem fair.

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# How A Knuckle Curver Knuckled Down In Lotus Land

BY BOB WISCHNIA

here was never much doubt that he'd make it. Big. From the beginning, it was obvious that Burt Hooton was a very special pitcher: The second time he started a majorleague game, on September 15, 1971, he struck out 15 New York Mets to tie an all-time Chicago Cubrecord. Six days later, he pitched his first shutout. In his next start, early in the 1972 season, he threw a no-hitter.

It didn't take long for him to lose it either. Within a year of Hooton's dazzling debut, his head and stomach had swelled to such proportions that he went from the No-hit Kid to the No-out Kid. His celebrated knuckle curve was more like a nickel curve and his career wasn't worth much more. In 1975, after three losing years in Chicago, the Cubs traded Hooton to Los Angeles. And presto. He won 18 games and finally attained the distinction that had been predicted for him.

"The pitching groove that Burt got into over his last ten, fifteen starts last season was as good as I've ever seen," Dodger manager Walter Alston said. "Over the last half of last year, he was the best pitcher in the National League. He was damn near unbeatable."

The fact is that after the All-Star

Game, he was unbeatable. Hooton won 12 straight decisions, a trick neither Sandy Koufax nor Don Drysdale ever managed as Dodgers.

Hooton's turnaround as a pitcher began two winters ago when he received permission from the Cubs to pitch for the team that Dodger thirdbase coach Tom Lasorda managed in the Dominican Republic League.

"I had a long talk with Burt one night while we were down there," Lasorda recalled as he dressed before a recent Dodger game. "I told Hoot that he was a disgrace to his uniform. And he was. Here was a kid who had the kind of arm you lie awake at night dreaming about and it was all going to waste."

"Maybe all I ever really needed was a good kick in the seat," Hooton says now, looking back. "With the Cubs, every time I pitched I expected to lose. It got so bad that I reached a point where I didn't care enough about myself or my profession. Tommy made me start to want to believe in myself again."

Because Hooton was still Chicago property back then, Lasorda did not feel free to make any changes in Burt's pitching motion. But Lasorda did recommend a jogging program to help the pitcher—who'd ballooned to 225 pounds—lose weight. Running three miles a day in a rubber suit,

Hooton lost 25 pounds by the end of the winter-league season and when 1975 spring training opened a few weeks later, he appeared to be in the best shape of his life. Yet, at the Chicago camp, he remained an ineffective pitcher.

"At that point I didn't much care how I was throwing because I was still throwing for the Cubs," Hooton said one Saturday morning in 1976 as he and his wife Ginger sipped orange juice in their rented townhouse in suburban Orange County. Hooton, a balding 26-year-old, had only gotten a few hours' sleep after pitching a shaky six innings the night before against his former Cub teammates.

"I don't think you can be too good too soon," Hooton said between yawns, "but the way I started off, a lotta people thought I was going to be Superman. My second year I was real confident and I pitched real well [2.81 ERA in 218 innings] but I wasn't winning as many games as I was losing. My brain started to wander to where I began having all this negative energy. It got to the point where I'd go out there figuring that even if I pitch good, I'm gonna lose and if I don't pitch so good, I'll be sitting out there in the bullpen for awhile."

After a couple of seasons shuttling between starting and the bullpen, Hooton thought about quitting baseball but didn't know what other occupation he could go into. And because the Cubs had nobody else, Hooton was in the starting rotation when the 1975 season opened. He quickly pitched his way out of it.

"Mike Tyson of the Cardinals hit a homer off me—and, there was a time that would've really upset me—but by then I couldn't have cared less," Hooton said. "Next time out, I got racked pretty good and they sent me right out to the bullpen. Ordinarily, I'm a superconfident guy but I had just lost it completely."

As Hooton's confidence diminished, he became an insomniac, according to former roommate and batterymate Ken Rudolph, who is

now with St. Louis. "Hoot's problem was he couldn't relax enough to get to sleep so he got into the habit of staying up all night watching television," Rudolph says. "That's okay if you can sleep all day, but with the Cubs we played more than half of our games in the daytime. There'd be times when he'd come to the ballpark in a dream world."

"I've heard that story before and it's a bunch of bull," said Hooton, who admits that one of the Cubs nicknamed him "Night Owl." "I don't have problems sleeping. There's a big difference between having a problem and having a preference. I just prefer staying up all night watching movies on the tube. I can go to sleep any time, anywhere. Heck, all last year I got

mail from people telling me how to sleep better. It was crazy. But that wasn't my problem with the Cubs. The problem was that whatever the Cubs told me didn't make any sense to me, and they figured I didn't make much sense to them."

Banished to the bullpen by manager Jim Marshall, in April, 1975, Hooton asked Cub vice-president John Holland to trade him, saying he couldn't play for a manager he didn't respect and who didn't respect him.

On May 2, 1975, Holland telephoned Al Campanis, the Dodgers' director of player personnel, and offered him Hooton. After Campanis checked with Alston, who checked with Lasorda and pitching coach Red Adams, a deal was made. For Hooton, the Dodgers gave up pitchers Geoff Zahn and Eddie Solomon, both now in the minor leagues.

The next afternoon Hooton was in Los Angeles. And the following day, in a game against San Diego, Alston brought Hooton in from the bullpen to protect a two-run lead. Within three innings, Hooton had blown the lead and lost the game. Afterward he was summoned to Alston's office.

"Was I shaking," Hooton says.
"Heck, I thought they were going to be sending me down to Albuquerque, though even that would've been better than Chicago. Walt sits me down and tells me that he liked what he saw out there—I don't know what—and that I'd be starting against Pittsburgh. And he told me to go see Red Adams the next day."

Adams, the Dodger pitching coach for seven years, had read the rave reports that Lasorda had filed on Hooton. "The ability was always there," Adams says, "there was never any question about that. But pitchers have a tendency to drift and Burt had drifted into a couple of bad habits. First thing we did was get him to wear contact lenses on the mound, which improved his concentration [he wears

Two wise coaches, an understanding manager and a sportswise hypnotist all helped put Burt Hooton together again.



#### Knuckle

CONTINUED

glasses when he bats]. And then we smoothed out his delivery some and worked on his timing, which was way off. I've been around pitchers my entire life, and on a major-league level I have never seen a more radical turnaround in just one season. I mean this guy was a step away from the minors and he became our stopper."

"Red got me back to pitching the way I used to throw," Hooton says. "I had always pitched good ball against the Dodgers and Red remembered how I looked when I had the good stuff. He got me to slow my hands and arm movement to get them synchronized with the rest of my body motion and he also got me to square my body up to home plate rather than to third base like I was doing. It's basic, fundamental stuff for an overhand pitcher like myself, but I couldn't tell what I was doing wrong and nobody on the Cubs was ever able to tell me.'

The day before Hooton went on his first road trip with the Dodgers, Willie Crawford suggested that Burt go with him to see Arthur Ellen, the hypnotist who had helped Maury Wills, Don Sutton and Koufax, among others.

"I was willing to try anything," Hooton says. "Ellen saw each of us individually for about twenty minutes and all I know is I left feeling more relaxed, calm and confident than I'd ever been. I can't even tell you if he hypnotized me or not, but I guess he must've.

"The way he explained it to me was that there was something sub-consciously blocking my mind that was making me afraid to do what I do best. I was actually afraid to pitch because of all this negativism that had been building up inside of me. With the Cubs I was complacent, lazy and I didn't care what happened to the team. Once I got that blocked out of my head, I felt ready to pitch again."

He started his first game for the

Dodgers in Pittsburgh and pitched six strong innings. Four days later he threw a two-hit shutout at the Cardinals and earned a permanent spot in the starting rotation.

Burt Carlton Hooton is a Texan who displays in his rented California house Longhorn beer mugs, glasses, placemats, posters and plaques. He was born in Greenville, raised in Corpus Christi, and now resides with his wife, Ginger, and their nine-month-old son, Gene, in Austin during the off season.

Hooton says he came up with his knuckle curve accidentally. "I was about fourteen," he recalls, "and just messing around with a knuckleball before a Pony League game. I didn't know at the time that a true knuckleballer like Charlie Hough or Wilbur Wood throws it with his fingertips. I thought you threw it with your knuckles on the ball. I found out pretty quick that I could put a good spin on the ball and I just kept throwing it and it kept getting harder and harder to hit. I never have learned a regular curve."

Hooton throws the knuckle curve straight overhand with the same motion as his fastball. He puts the knuckles of his middle and index fingers on the ball and snaps his wrist when he releases it. The ball overspins and breaks down as it reaches the plate. He's the only majorleague pitcher to throw the knuckle curve, which Red Adams says should be called a "downer curve."

His junior year in high school Hooton had a 15-1 record and pitched his team to the state championship. The Mets drafted him, but Burt opted for a full scholarship to the University of Texas, where he was an All-American three seasons. In his junior year, 1971, the Cubs took him in the first round of the draft and gave him a \$50,000 bonus.

After a brief trial with the Cubs, he was optioned to Tacoma, and there, he overwhelmed the Pacific Coast League. Against Eugene, Hooton struck out 19 to tie a PCL record. In his next start, he struck out 16 against a Spokane team managed by Lasorda.

"Burt was the best minor-league pitcher I've ever seen," Lasorda says. "When I filed my scouting report on him, they didn't believe any pitcher could have so much stuff."

When the 1972 season opened, Cub manager Leo Durocher made Hooton his No. 2 starter behind Ferguson Jenkins. Hoot's first start of the year was on a cold, overcast afternoon at Wrigley Field with the wind blowing in at 25-30 knots. He walked seven and struck out seven but did not allow Philadelphia a hit. He was 22 years old.

Soon after that, though, Hooton began his two years of failure and frustration. But then there was the trade to Los Angeles and, ultimately, 12 straight victories.

This year, the Dodgers saved Hooton for their home opener and 52,703 came to see if he could make it 13 wins in a row. He could not. San Diego beat him, 8-5, his first loss since July 10, 1975. But he didn't let it upset him.

"I'm more of a pro now," he said at his home not long ago. "I don't like to dwell on those things. You'll have to excuse me now. I've gotta get my running in before I leave for the game. If you want, you can ask me some questions while we run."

Hooton jogs four miles daily, except on the day before and the day of a starting assignment. He set a fast pace as we ran through the cities of Yorba Linda and Placentia.

When we stopped for a traffic light, Hooton mentioned that the night before a sportswriter had asked him who was the toughest hitter for him—the one man Hooton most dreads.

"That's a good question," I panted, "who is it?"

"That's just it," Hoot said as we started off again. "I don't dread any hitter anymore. I used to be terrified of seeing Willie Stargell dragging a bat up to the plate because I knew if I made one little mistake, he'd murder it. I was thinking 'mistake' instead of 'strikeout.' That was negative thinking which was my whole problem. You got any more questions?"

"Yeah. How much farther?"

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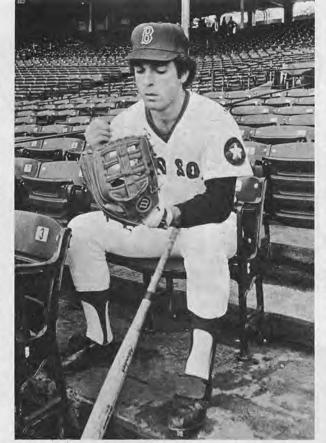
t's one o'clock in the morning and I am standing in front of the Fenway Boylston Motel with Bernardo Carbo, designated hitter, sometime rightfielder, and a Boston Red Sox hero in the last World Series. We are on an early morning snack run. Bernie's pregnant wife, Susan, and his two daughters, Tracy Ann (three) and Mandy (one), have just arrived from Detroit and Bernie and I have spent the last hour moving them from his Dodge van into their motel. Now Carbo is tired, hungry, and worried about tomorrow's game.

"I gotta get some food, and then get some sleep," he says. "I don't want to repeat today's perform-

ance."

Today was the season opener at Fenway Park, and though the Red Sox beat the Indians 7-4, Carbo struck out three times and grounded weakly to second.

We are just about to cross the Fenway Boylston parking lot when we see a Mercury come screaming down Boylston Street out of control. There is a double-parked Chevrolet in its way, and the crazed Mercury careens around it—right into the path of an oncoming Wonder Bread truck, which frantically



honks its horn. The Merc swerves past the truck, but in doing so, keels over on two wheels. Then, like a slow-motion violence scene from Sam Peckinpah, the Merc pitches all the way over on its top, screeches along on the cement for about ten yards and plows into a pole. The entire front end of the Mercury is clipped off. Miraculously, the driver staggers out of the overturned car, falls to the street, rolls over a couple of times, almost makes it to his feet and slumps down again. Then he actually gets

up, dusts himself off, and walks away.

"Oh my God," Bernie Carbo says softly, staring at the driver.

I am speechless, my eyes moving from the man to the wreck as screaming sirens and flashing lights approach.

That's when I notice the little guy on our left with long, hippie hair, wire-rim glasses, and a very open mouth. He is not looking at the accident, but at Carbo. He walks over staring up and down at Carbo, as if Bernie is some strange and indescribable piece of contemporary art.

Carbo cannot help noticing the guy, but Bernie's mind is on the horrible scene he's just witnessed.

"Christ, what an accident!" he says.

"Yeah . . . you're him," the little guy says.

"Huh?" says Carbo.

The little guy smiles, his tongue darting in and out like an iguana. "It's really you," he says. "C'mon don't try to get out of it."

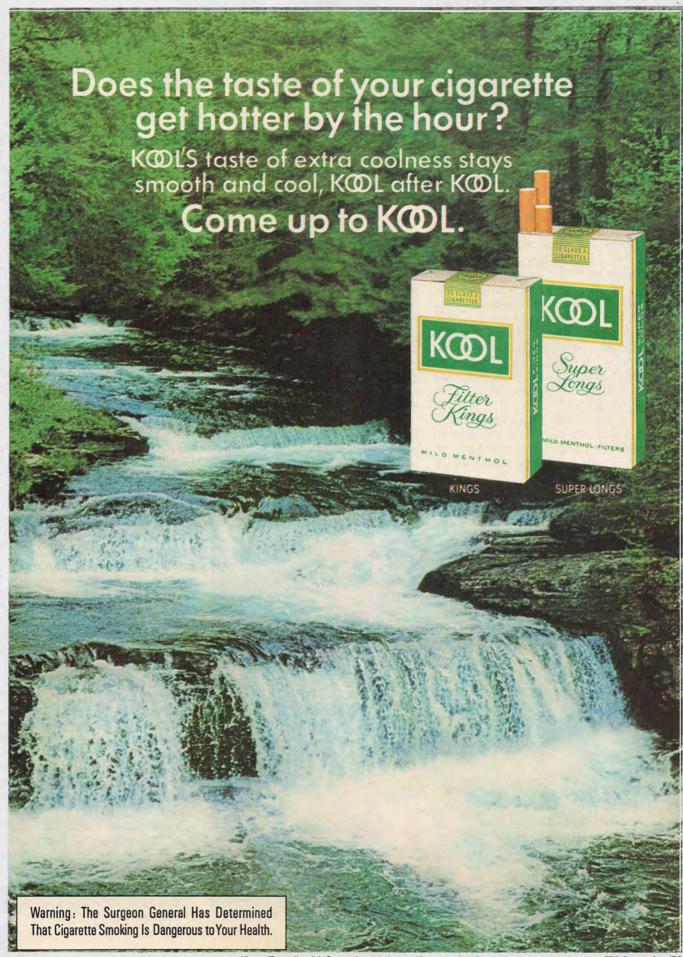
"What?" Carbo says in disbelief.

"You're Bernie Carbo!" the little guy says, hopping up and down ecstatically. "C'mon, admit it."

"Yeah," says Bernie Carbo, flashing his sad-brown-Spanish

BY ROBERT WARD

#### Why Bernie Carbo Dumped His Stuffed Gorilla... & Other Hairy Stories



#### Bernie

CONTINUED

eyes at the little guy. "Yeah, I'm Bernie Carbo... but what does that mean now? Look at this accident!"

"Heck, that was just an accident," the little guy says. "Listen, Bernie...lemme tell you what happened last year during the sixth game. I had the day off from the refrigerator plant, and I was with my girl, Babe, and we was watching the ballgame, and man we was down... ya know...like really down... and when you came up, I says to Babe: 'Bernie Carbo might surprise you, honey,' but she didn't believe it. But you did it. After almost striking out. You did it! Can I shake your hand, Bernie?"

Bernie Carbo forces a smile. This is too much. Here is the Accident of the Year, and all this guy wants to do is pump Bernie's hand—which he does furiously.

"Wait'll I tell the Babe," he says, walking away, shaking his head. Then he stops and turns once more to Carbo. "Hey, Bernie—you gonna be here long? Babe gets back from the Amy Joy shop in about an hour and—"

Carbo shakes his head. "Sorry," he says. "Gotta get some sleep. Game tomorrow."

"Right, right," says the little guy. "Well hit another one, Bernie!" He gets into a 1963 Corvette and roars off.

"Jesus," I say to Carbo, "are they all that loyal in Boston?"

"Yeah," Bernie says, but he is not smiling. "That's what makes it so tough to play here . . . as well as what makes it so great. I mean, if a guy is that devoted to you, you gotta play as hard as you can, and when you let down, or screw around or don't have a good day, you feel terrible. There's nothing like Boston fans. I'll tell you, it makes you worry even more."

We climb into Carbo's van and he says, "Gonna skip eating. Gotta get some sleep. Gotta do *good* tomorrow!"

As we drive around the pieces of glass and smoking scrap metal motor, Bernie Carbo's dark handsome face furrows up in what is his perpetual look—one of anxiety and worry and pressure.

Bernardo Carbo was born August 5, 1947 in Detroit, Mich. He was All-State at Lavonia Franklin High School in baseball and in 1965 he was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds ahead of Johnny Bench. After five years in the minors, the lefthandedhitting outfielder made the Reds in 1970 and was named The Sporting News' National League Rookie of the Year. During that first season, Carbo batted .310 with 21 home runs and 63 runs batted in. It looked like a simple case of Superstardom for Carbo. I lived in Cincinnati at the time, and remember pages of newsprint in the papers comparing Carbo to Ted Williams. Unfortunately, instead of Ted Williams, Carbo soon began to draw comparisons with Esther Williams. In his second year with the Big Red Machine, Carbo hit .219, and in May of the 1972 season he was traded to St. Louis, where he batted .258 with only 34 RBI and seven home runs. After batting .286 as a part-time outfielder in 1973, the Cardinals traded him to the Red Sox.

Carbo's problems didn't seem to be a suddenly vanishing talent so much as a suddenly vanishing confidence. In Boston his power returned. Though still a part-time outfielder and designated hitter, his home runs went up to 12 and 15 in the past two seasons. But Carbo has been most impressive under pressure.

Last season, Carbo batted over .300 through the first part of the season and, according to Red Sox manager Darrell Johnson: "Bernie kept us in the pennant race almost single-handedly with his bat early in the year." He tailed off badly the last two months of the season, then came back to star in the World Series.

Even before Carbo hit his dramatic home run, he had received considerable attention from the Boston press. In 1974 Carbo

All Bernie Carbo's fantasies turned into reality—with one dramatic home run in the sixth game of the 1975 World Series.



showed up in the locker room and at restaurants carrying a giant stuffed gorilla named Mighty Joe Young, and he was suddenly considered a "crazy," a side of him that no one had seen before. Last season he took to rubbing a small Buddha's stomach for "luck" before going to bat. Word went out around the league that Carbo was a "flake."

I went to Boston on Opening Day to check out Bernie Carbo, a player I'd always been fond of, for his clutch hitting and for his good strong arm and, most of all, for his hustle. Obviously, from reports I'd read, I expected to find something of a Loosey Goosey Nut. But Carbo is far more complex and far more interesting than the Color Announcer's Dream.

It is 11 o'clock on Opening Day, and the dining room of the Fenway Boylston is filled with sports-writers, TV announcers and Boston Red Sox. Bernie Carbo comes down from his room, takes one look at the festive spirit of the place and heads out the door.

"You wanta eat with me, you gotta come around the block," he

says. "I like this place around the corner. It's good." He stops and looks at me. "It's kind of a downhome place, though. I mean it's not as nice as the Boylston . . . maybe you won't like it."

It doesn't matter, because we are on our way there anyway, Carbo striding along briskly, his tight-knit curly hair bobbing up and down, his brown leather jacket hanging open to reveal his flesh-hugging midnight-blue body shirt. As we turn the corner, a truck driver almost slams into a pole. "Hey, Bernardo!" he yells out the window. Carbo, head down, moving swiftly on the balls of his feet, like a dancer, pivots, turns, waves, and keeps on going. It's enjoyable to walk with the six-foot, 185-pound Carbo, for he seems to float along the street. He is a delicate combination of muscle and that special neatness that wiry athletes seem to have. Like his batting swing, his movements are concise, expressive. His face, handsome, dark-skinned, with soulful brown eyes and prominent cheekbones, is sensitive, almost feminine in its outline. He is able to suggest feelings by the slightest motion of an eyebrow, the faintest gesture of a hand. On retiring, Carbo should go directly into acting.

"That's what my mother said to me when I was a kid growing up in Detroit," he says, as we wait in line at the Triangle Cafeteria, a homey place with a big Italian man behind the stainless steel counter.

"Hey, Bernardo, you hitta homer?" he says.

Bernie smiles and says he'll try. As we move along picking up food, Bernie says, "I like this place. No bull."

We sit in a booth, and Carbo begins enthusiastically eating his two eggs, home fries and bacon. "Yeah, my mother said I should be a flamenco dancer," he says. "I was good at it, and I loved it, but . . . well, I don't want to knock my old man. He's a product of his day just like we all are, but he said, 'Hey, none of that flamenco stuff. Everybody will think my kid's a faggot.' Kids today don't have to go through that kind of stuff."

"Did your father want you to be a ballplayer?"

Carbo waves his arms dramatically. "Yes. You see my old man's dream was to be a ballplayer. That was what he wanted more than anything in the world. He had to make it as a ballplayer, be in the bigs . . . but he never did. Instead he spent twenty years on the line at the Fisher Body Plant, and so did my mother. I can't complain because they were good to me . . . but it was a lonely childhood. The only thing that kept me going was my dream of being a ballplayer. I'd listen to the Tigers, and I'd have dreams of being in the outfield, and somebody like Larry Doby of Cleveland would come up, and he'd hit this long blast, and I'd hear the announcer's voice: 'It's going, going . . .' But before he could say 'gone,' I'd suddenly start stretching, you know? I'd stretch, and stretch, and then I'd be like hanging off the top of the wall-and I'd pull it in."

I smile, and tell him I had similar dreams as a kid.

"Yeah? Well, I guess everyone does. But for me . . . the dreams



#### Bernie

CONTINUED

never changed. You know, I still have that dream. Of making the great catch, of hitting the great home run. I dream of hanging off the Green Monster in Fenway while everybody goes nuts."

"Do you ever wonder about

those dreams?"

"Sure. I guess really, I had the dream come true last season in the sixth game when I hit the homer. When you're younger you think that every moment can be like that one but you come to an age and you realize it's not going to be so. I'm twenty-eight now."

He stops and smiles; there's not a trace of regret on his face, or of pathos in his voice. He's simply

stating the facts.

"What was it like to hit the homer?" I ask him.

"God, it was wonderful. It was like being in a dream, you know. I had almost struck out. I was just praying I'd get a piece of it. And then, when I hit it, I still thought it was going to be caught. I didn't know until I saw the outfielders looking in the stands, and then I wanted to stay on the bases forever. I was rounding second, and I kept thinking, 'Don't let it end—let me keep running around the bases.'"

Carbo smiles generously, boyishly, and you can't help but feel good for him. After all, the sixth-game homer was like something out of the boy's novels of John R. Tunis (*The Kid Comes Back*). Two down, two strikes, the World Series in the balance: "It's a shame you didn't

win the Series," I say.

"Yeah," says Carbo, "but you know what? It's such a pleasure to play in Boston . . . it's more of a pleasure to play in Boston, even losing, than it was being in Cincinnati when I was Rookie of the Year."

"Why was that?"

"Jeez," says Bernie, "in Cincinnati, the pressure is always on you. I'd had this great rookie year, right. But out there that wasn't enough. They would say, 'Well, you hit three-ten, had so many homers . . . now how much you gonna top that by next year?' It was like understood that no matter how well you had done, you somehow had to top it."

"Isn't that only natural?"

"I guess. But it's the way it was done. Like: Here I am, Rookie of the Year, and they are arguing over giving me a ten-thousand-dollar raise. Not only that, but they told me I had to cut my hair. Everyone on the team was supposed to have crew-cuts. You know the Mt. Adams section of Cincy, where all the hippies and party people hang out?"

"Sure, it's a good place. I used to

go there."

"So did I," says Carbo. "But not after they found out. Sparky Anderson would call me in and say he wanted to have a 'discussion' with me. They weren't honest enough to come right out and say it. They'd try to talk with you, like you were some high-school kid who had taken the car out without asking permission. They'd say, 'Now, Bernie . . . we want to 'dis-cuss' your friends. We see that you've been getting tickets for some of those . . . weirdo types . . . and are letting them sit behind home plate . . . where everybody can see 'em . . . and we want to 'discuss' this as a problem.' I mean, it was such bull. My baseball game was going great then. It got so I had to tell my friends that I could only get 'em tickets if they'd sit up high, where none of the baseball brass could see 'em. It put a lot of pressure on me. I felt like everything I did was wrong. No matter how good you were, it wasn't quite good enough.'

"Did you like the other Red play-

ers?"

Carbo nods enthusiastically. "Sure, most of the guys were great. But they had families. They wouldn't stick up for each other. I mean, if you were at all different there, you were out. Everybody was supposed to look like Pete Rose."

As we finish eating, a little old lady with bushy grey eyebrows, twisted snakelike hair, three sweaters and about 50 Red Sox buttons pinned on her, haltingly stumbles up to the table. "Bernie," she says. "You gonna play today, hon?"

Bernie smiles, and reaches out to receive the wet cocktail napkin she is offering him to sign. He takes the pen from her shaking hand, and asks her name.

"Alice Murphy," she says.

Carbo smiles and writes, "To Alice Murphy, a Great Fan, Love and Trust, Bernie Carbo."

Alice takes the napkin, looks down at it and smiles gratefully. "God Bless you, Bernardo," she says.

As we pay our bill and leave the Triangle, Carbo smiles. "That's how it is here. The front office people are just like the fans. Mr. Yawkey is the greatest man in the world. He cares about you. You're not just a piece of meat. You're not even just a 'ballplayer.' I'm a person, with feelings, and everyone from Mr. Yawkey to Darrell Johnson, to Dick Pole . . . and Johnny Pesky, they treat you like they love you."

At Fenway Park I say goodbye to Carbo as he goes into the dressing room to suit up. He is undoubtedly in a strange position, I think. He could be starting for most of the teams in the league with the exception of the one he's on. Yet he seems to have achieved a precarious happiness, a balance which has obviously not been easily obtained.

After the game, I wander in the Boston clubhouse and the local sportswriters are all talking to Jim Rice, who has started off the year by high-sliding into Cleveland catcher Ray Fosse, and inflicting a three-stitch wound in Fosse's thumb. After Rice gives out a few sullen quotes ("Maybe Fosse will know better than to block the plate against me again"), he heads for the shower, and the writers stampede over to Reggie Cleveland, who had an excellent day. No one bothers

the hitless Carbo, who sits by his locker peeling off his shirt.

"Glad you won, Bernie," I say, trying to be tactful about his three strikeouts.

But there is no need for tact. Despite Carbo's reputation as a "moody," "brooding" player, he seems genuinely confident and under control.

"Well, since I got hit with that pitch in spring training, I haven't had much time to get the old timing back," he says, smiling. "But it'll come. I'm not worrying about it. Not this year. I'm going to take it easy and relax."

He says the last sentence with just a little too much self-consciousness, as if he is trying to program himself for "RELAXATION." "You seem like a person who doesn't ever really relax," I say.

"That's true," Carbo says. "You see . . . I got to thinking about what I told you about my father today. Don't put anything negative in the article about him. I love him very

much, and part of my success I owe to him... but you know it did sort of start there. I always felt I have to be the best. You know some guys worry about making it to the bigs... well, I never even thought about that. I worried, right from the start, if I would be as good as Ted Williams! I guess my Dad made me really want to be great. And since I was an only child and my parents worked, I'd come home and just ..."

"Fantasize?"

"Yeah. I'd dream all the time of being best, and at Cincy, well, they kept that pressure on you. This year is the first year I feel like I don't have someone watching me."

"Kurt Vonnegut, the novelist, wrote that most Americans live as though there is a great big invisible eye watching them and frowning," I say.

"Did he?" Carbo says, his eyes brightening. "That's good to know—that other people feel that way, too. I used to think it was only me. So much pressure. You see it used to be if I had a bad day like today, by the third or fourth time I was up, I'd be sweating, and I'd be saying to myself, 'I've got to get a hit. I've just got to.' 'Cause I'm the kind of ballplayer if I don't go two for four, I don't play the next day. And you know for me, back in those days . . . well, if you were gonna put me on the bench you might as well just take a gun to my head and blow my brains out. That's how I took it. And so, of course, by the time I did get up and I was oh for three, well, naturally I was pressing, and I'd strike out or pop up . . . and I couldn't handle it. I couldn't."

The Boston locker room is almost all cleared out. But next to us is Luis Tiant, leafing through the Official Boston Red Sox Yearbook. "Look at dess ugly bastards," Looie is saying. "Look at deem. Ughhh. Es ugliest people I ever see. Now look at dees handsome man. Esss Looie. He handsome."

Carbo laughs, and Tiant turns and throws a baseball at Carl Yastrzemski's back. He turns quickly



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#### Bernie

and gives Tiant a mock warning.

"Now there is a relaxed individual," Carbo says of Tiant. "He can take it easy. The same with Fred Lynn and Jim Rice. I'm amazed at a guy like Lynn. He can go oh for seventeen, and just take it in stride. Like one time last year he was in a real bad slump, and I said, 'What's wrong with your swing, Fred?' and he said, 'There's nothing wrong with my swing. I'm just not hitting the ball, that's all.' I was never able to take it in stride like that."

Carbo gets up and stretches, then he dips into his past again and shakes his head: "When I think of the way I used to get. I would come home, go directly to the local bar and just pour them down, one drink after another. Then, I'd maybe buy a six pack and take it home and get drunk. I'd be so down. I'd scream at my wife . . . and then I'd feel worse, guilty and stupid for taking it out on her. But I couldn't help myself, and so I'd get worse; I broke two chairs one night."

"Did you think maybe you were

through?"

'No . . . it's just that I listened to everyone except myself. The Red batting coaches would say, 'Well, your problem is you aren't hitting the change of pace.' Now how many change-of-pace pitches do you see in one game? Maybe two or three. But these guys have me in the batting cage, and they're changing my stance and having the battingpractice pitcher throw all these change-of-pace pitches at you. And inside you're dying because you know it's not what you need. But you are so mixed-up you just keep letting them do it. I think batting coaches have screwed up more guys than anything else. What they don't understand is that every guy can't hit every pitch. He should work on a hitter's strengths."

we've got," Pesky says. "He'll do anything for the team. We all feel a

about Bernie Carbo.

little bad that he doesn't play more regularly. With Rice, Lynn and Dewey Evans in the outfield, it's rough for Bernie. But he's a hitter, and he's not afraid of anything. It don't matter who's pitching-Bernie will battle him.'

batting practice before the second

game, I ask coach Johnny Pesky

"He's the greatest competitor

"So many athletes seem like business execs these days," I suggest. "Carbo seems somehow . . . old-

fashioned."

"That's right," Pesky says. "He's sort of like a Gas House Gang type player. He gives it all he's got. I like him. Don Zimmer, our other coach, likes him-no, 'like' is not strong enough: Don loves the kid. We all do, really."

"He worries a lot though, doesn't

Pesky nods, and picks up an aluminum fungo bat. "Yeah, the kid's a brooder. But he's getting better with that, too. His best days might still be ahead of him.'

Carbo steps into the batting cage. His swing is still a little off, but when he does connect the ball rockets out against the Green Monster.

'Hitting 'em a little better today, Bob," he says. "It's coming back. That's what I'm starting to learn about myself, I guess. That there's no need to press. I mean, whatever you have is gonna stay there; I think that might come from being an only child, being lonely. I used to feel that I had to make it fast, because what if it went away. . . . Oh, the dreams I had. I was gonna be like Ted Williams. You know? I'm not saving I still don't feel the pressure. I feel it right now. I feel it every day. Sometimes I just wish the pressure would go away . . . but I'm finally starting to learn that it's me that's making these impossible demands on myself. It's not Cincy anymore. It's not the Red Sox. I guess when I started to realize that, I started to . . . accept myself. I guess I started to realize I don't have to be Mickey Mantle or Ted Williams or Willie Mays . . . everybody can't be a superstar. And if that doesn't sound like much . . . well, it took a long time before I could say that.'

I nod, knowing how hard it is for all of us to come to terms with ourselves. How much harder it must be for a professional athlete who has fed himself a diet of Superstar Dreams from his youngest years, and who has so often come so close to that dream without ever achieving it for any sustained length of time: "God, it was wonderful. I kept thinking, 'Don't let it end-let me keep running around the bases."

Carbo and I go into the locker room, and I finally ask him about the gorilla and the Buddhas.

Well, you see," Carbo explains, "I was so worried last year about doing well in the Series that I was starting to get into one of my real depressed states . . . so I got the gorilla, and the Buddhas to make myself feel crazy. You get a few laughs and you forget your troubles."

"Where are they now?" I say. "Oh, my wife left 'em in De-

troit," Carbo says. "I don't think I'll be using 'em much this year. You know, they were just props-crutches really. I needed that stuff then but now I think I'm finally on the right track. I'm not going to worry about being Ted Williams or being colorful or hitting four hundred. I'm a ballplayer and a good one. I don't need Mighty Joe Young anymore. I think this year I'm gonna relax a little and finally start appreciating Bernie Carbo.'

One hopes that its true, because Carbo is now under a new pressure. His dream of becoming a regular player again has been realized. Not in Boston, however, but in a town which is very much like Cincinnati-Milwaukee. Early in June, Bernie Carbo was traded to the Brewers for outfielder Bobby Darwin and pitcher Tom Murphy. Upon reading about the trade, I wondered if it might be too much for him. I hope not, because though he's never going to be Ted Williams, he could still be the best Bernie Carbo in baseball. And that ain't bad, Mighty Joe Young!

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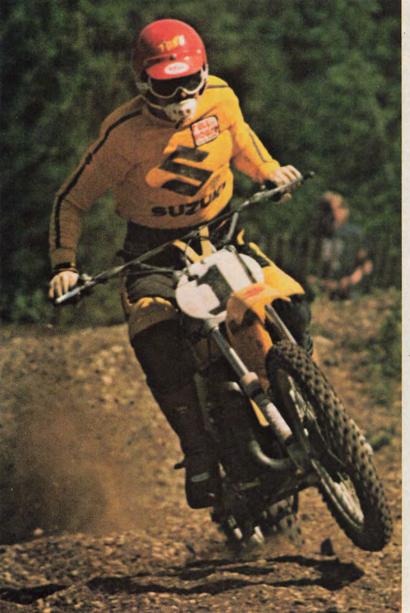
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# The Younge

BY JERRY ADLER

he climax to the Sixth Annual Daytona Superseries of Motocross came swiftly last March, less than five seconds into the third and final heat. Jim Weinert's big green Kawasaki tangled with a pair of yellow Suzukis on the first turn and he went over with the motorcycle on his leg. Half a lap later, Tony DiStefano, in the lead, got the signal from his mechanic that Weinert was down, "I knew I could relax a little then," DiStefano said later, "because Weinert was the only one who could have won the race besides me. I just had to stay on my bike to win.'

In motocross, motorized steeplechase, staying on the motorcycle is no small part of the challenge. The sport was conceived in Europe as a grueling test of rider and machine against the roughest of terrain: Rocky Swedish mountains and rugged Spanish hillsides. Daytona is as flat as a poker chip, but two weeks before the race, the Speedway management had called in Gary Bailey, once one of the great racers in the ten-year history of American motocross and now a part-time builder of motocross courses. With 400 hay-

Motocross champ Tony DiStefano (with Jim Weinert in green shirt) never rides motorcycles for pleasure, only for profit.

bales and truckloads of sandy Florida soil, Bailey sculpted a course that snaked across the barren Daytona infield as though it were squeezed from a tube. There were hairpin turns, lined with haybales, for riders to take keeled over like sailboats. There were six-foot cliffs to hurtle off, and the muddy, fivefeet deep "alligator pits" that are Bailey's trademark. One rider disappeared into one of the pits and had to be hauled out by a tractor. The course didn't have the buried rocks and roots that make some of the great courses so interesting when a tire uncovers one in midrace. There were no real hills to climb like those at Saddleback in California or the layout in New Berlin, N.Y. But Gary Bailey's course was clearly a tough test, and of the 40 entries in the featured 250cc class-in which DiStefano raced his Suzuki-exactly half failed to complete their three heats.

The harshest test of a motocross course comes right at the start: 40 riders line up abreast, their elbows almost touching. They race 100 yards to the first turn, which is 35feet wide. Everybody tries for the inside line on the turn, but if more than four riders arrive together, it means trouble. Spermatozoa have

an easy trip by comparison.

Tony DiStefano, who at age 19 is the defending national 250cc champion, feels that he is among the best "moto" starters in the world. Di-Stefano is brashly confident and obsessed with winning motocross races. He tries to race every Sunday from early February through late November, and when he's not racing, he's going over his machinery with his mechanic, Keith McCarty. "I like to know what's going on down there," Tony says. "I don't want to come back to Keith in the middle of a race and say, 'Something feels wrong, but I'm not sure what.' "

"Tony doesn't water-ski or hangglide or anything," says a Suzuki executive who knows him well. "When he wants to get away from it all. . . . Well. I don't think he ever does get away from it all." Yet DiStefano doesn't like to ride motorcycles for fun, except through the woods. "It's really dangerous out on the street," he says. "A motorcycle is hard to see.'

DiStefano is a six-foot-one, 200pounder, which makes him about the heaviest motocross rider on the pro tour. He was nearly that size when, at age 15, he lied about his age to enter a professional motorcycle race in Ohio. He won, but the next day someone revealed that



### Racer

DiStefano was three years too young for eligibility in that competition. DiStefano's trophy was taken away, but partly as a result of the incident, the American Motorcycle Association adopted what is

cycle Association adopted what is sometimes called the "DiStefano rule," lowering the minimum age for a professional license to 16.

In the tenth grade, DiStefano quit school in Morrisville, Pa., and set off to be a professional motocross racer. The next year, 1974, he finished second in the AMA National 500cc rankings by the margin of a broken thumb on his throttle hand. Uniquely, he did it without the sponsorship of a major motorcycle man-

ufacturer-an accomplishment parallel to that of a pitcher who wins 30 games for a last-place club while driving the team bus between starts. Almost every other rider of Di-Stefano's caliber was under contract to a Japanese motorcycle manufacturer and flew from race to race while a team of mechanics worked on his specially tooled bike. Di-Stefano loaded his Czech-made CZ in the back of a van and drove himself to races. When something on the bike broke, he fixed it himself. When he fractured his thumb, he didn't bother to get it set. The romantic term for a rider who sponsors himself is "privateer." Tony DiStefano was the youngest, fastest privateer anyone had ever seen.

There are local motocross races all over the country, and manufacturers rely on gossip and scouting reports from their dealers to find good young talent. Yet here was a free agent on the national circuit, beating all the high-priced factory talent. The next year, 1975, Suzuki, which was rebuilding its team and stressing youth, offered DiStefano an excellent contract. The exact salary is not only a secret, but is complicated by a system of bonuses for winning and also by the purses, which average around \$2,000 for first place. It is reasonable to guess, though, that DiStefano was guaranteed a salary of about \$40,000. More important, DiStefano was allowed to continue to wear his Full House brand leathers, which compete with Suzuki's own riding-wear line. Full House is now pushing a "Tony D" line of gear, and if DiStefano retains his national championship in 1976, he could earn more than \$100,000 this year.

Tony D wants to be motocross champion of the world. There has never been an American world champion. In fact, up through last year only three American riders, Jim Pomeroy, Brad Lackey and Marty Smith, had ever won any of the European Grand Prix races which decide the world title. There were no Europeans at the Daytona race. They weren't invited, and they wouldn't have come if they had been; most Europeans hold to a quaint conviction that only God can make a motocross course. What's more, they feel the competition here is not up to world standards.

"Americans are going to take over," DiStefano says confidently. "The good young riders are all Americans. In Europe they don't have the prizes to give out to beginning riders to keep them in racing. All the money's at the top, and no one's coming up." The man at the top, the defending world champion, is Roger DeCoster, a 31-year-old Belgian, who also races for Suzuki.

"I'm not ready yet, myself," says Tony D. "I want to win another National Championship first. Then next year I want to start racing in Europe."

Between races DiStefano travels alone or with Ray Martino, who is an older man, a home-town neighbor, who has been shepherding Tony since the youngster's parents separated. Martino is DiStefano's companion, road manager and business manager. Keith McCarty, the mechanic, is DiStefano's closest friend. After each of his victories, DiStefano is scrupulous about sharing credit with McCarty, who travels with the motorcycle van from race to race and is at work in the pits before the champion gets to the track in the morning. At Daytona, on Gary Bailey's course, the importance of a good mechanic is evident. Something as seemingly innocent as an air-filter mounting becomes a maior technological challenge on a motocross bike. The Daytona track is full of sand, and one grain can plug up a carburetor jet for an instant-which is all it takes for a piston to overheat and seize. McCarty, thus, spends 30 minutes mounting the air filter on the Suzuki so that nothing will come loose, even after the bike has slammed into the ground at 40 miles an hour a hundred times.

Motocross looks and sounds a lot more dangerous than it is. Bikes do fly off jumps at 40 miles an hour, and if one of them ever lands upside down it's obviously going to be a pretty severe test of a rider's helmet. But the American Motorcycle Association reports only one fatal injury in sanctioned professional motocross since it began. Generally, motocross machines go down not in flames but in plumes of sand and mud, and most often they get picked up again and set on their course.

Which is what Jim Weinert did when he went over at the start of the third heat at Daytona. Hopping to his feet, he righted the Kawasaki, kicked it to a start and was racing again. DiStefano was in front, far down the track, but Weinert mounted his long-range challenge anyway, gunning his bike past one rider after another. By the third lap he had picked up half-a-dozen places and was running seventh. But DiStefano was going to be very tough to catch. The Suzuki was running flawlessly. And with his great strength and balance he took off bolBefore.

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Get Afta.

dly from jumps and adjusted the attitude of his bike in midair so that it regained the earth just so: The knobby rear tire touching down first and digging in, driving the machine forward without a lost second.

The course's trickiest terrain was Gary Bailey's double jump, two mounds on the backstretch. The mounds were not twins. The first one was four feet high and the second, 24 feet away, rose six feet, six inches. Bailey says he built it that way so that a good rider would be able to take off from the first mound and just clear the second. A mediocre rider, or one having trouble with his bike, would have to tackle them separately, thus losing time. DiStefano sailed over both mounds.

The sun hung low and red in the dust behind the Fireball Roberts Grandstand as DiStefano charged around the course for the last time. Weinert was hanging on grimly, be-

hind him. Then, with five minutes to go, Weinert's chain popped off and he skidded to a halt. The whole back end of his motorcycle had been twisted in the collision at the start of the heat, and he'd been fortunate to go as far as he had. Patiently, he squatted by the side of the track now, alongside his bike, and carefully put the chain back on the sprockets. He was able to start up again and placed third in the accumulative scoring for the day.

At the end, DiStefano was heading for the winner's circle with a second and two firsts for the day, the overall victor by a wide margin. There, after peeling off his sweaty, muddy "Tony D" leathers, he stood, happily autographing programs and giving away pictures. Tony DiStefano, age 19, had just earned some \$5,000 for an afternoon's work. This year America. Next year the world.

fter a freshman year of pole-sitter starts and up-the-track finishes, an All-American GT car, the Chevrolet Monza, is at last driving those exotic Europeans, the Porsche Carreras and BMW CSLs, out of the winner's circle in John Bishop's Camel GT road racing series. Bishop, the bright, energetic disciple of NASCAR's kingpin Bill France and the president of the International Motorsports Association, which packages the Camel series, had too much of a good thing on his hands in the sleek German coupes. No American iron was competitive. In the interest of the approaching Bicentennial and healthy turnstile action, Bishop created the All-American GT class, which in simple terms, allowed private car builders in the U.S. to do what the European factories did for their customers, build special models using standard body shells as a starting point. To keep the "All-American GT" label honest, all the "go-faster" items added had to have "Made in U.S.A." stamped on the

Bishop got a big assist from bestselling author Vince Piggins (75,000 copies at \$5.95, third printing in the works). Piggins' book deals not with sexy secretaries, but sexy au-

tomotive hardware; is entitled Chevrolet Power. While readily available in Detroit, it cannot be found at your friendly neighborhood book stall. Since Piggins' literary output is limited, he toils in Chevrolet's engineering department and is probably the single person most responsible for the fact that the bulk of stock cars racing in the U.S., whether on the prestigious NASCAR circuit or Friday night clay quarter-mile tracks, have Chevy powerplants under the hood. With all American factories officially out of racing, Piggins' role is limited to selling parts. He sees to it that they are cheap, effective and readily available through any Chevy dealer.

Contained in Piggins' two-and-ahalf pound, non-fiction tome are all the engine and transmission parts, virtually all the body panels and some of the know-how to transform a \$3,727 base price Monza into a 200 mph Formula 5,000 racing car dressed in two seater Chevrolet outer skin.

For non-tinkerers, de Kon Engineering in de Kalb, Ill., will do the entire job to order for \$29,500 including the Monza they start with. They have built seven so far, one of which Indy star Al Unser placed on the outside pole in February's Daytona IMSA race. He called it "the pretti-

est race car I ever drove." Unser was enlisted by de Kon partner Horst Kwech, a pretty fair racer himself. Kwech drove the Monza GT last year but realized he had "more car than driver."

The first winning Monza, also a de Kon car, was driven, however, by a different Al, last name Holbert, not Unser. Son of a successful 1950's road racer and Porsche dealer, he grew up in the trade, won at Atlanta and Laguna Sera, finished second to new hot-shoe Mike Keyser in yet another Monza at mid-Ohio. Keyser's performance earned him an invitation to the prestigious Le Mans 24-hour race.

What do de Kon partners Kwech and Lee Dyhstra, a former General Motors and Ford employee, who loved racing too much to stay with the big manufacturers, do to a street Monza to make it a racing winner?

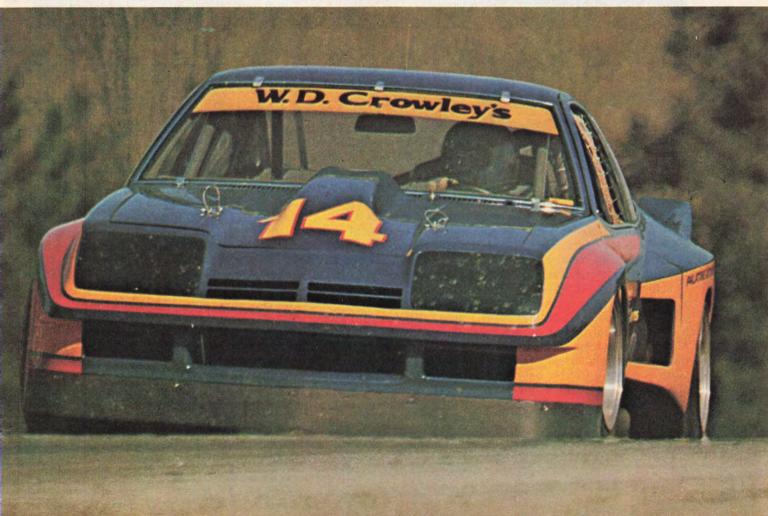
In Dyhstra's words "What we have, really, is a race car based on a pure production body shell. The chassis and suspension modules are pure racing stuff. The body is fairly stock, with a few added components like fender flares for bigger tires and the like. It's not a Sunday afternoon project by any stretch of the imagination, not if you want the

Above, Al Unser's Monza, "the prettiest," in his view, and, at right, Al Holbert's Monza, the winningest on the GT circuit.

BY BOB CUTTER

## At Last: An American GT Car That WINS









car to be really competitive."

The prototype racing Monza suffered teething problems throughout 1975, the year of its debut in competition. But at Road Atlanta this year, the car came of age. In addition to Holbert's first place, Mike Keyser brought home another Dekon Monza second, and John Morton took fifth place in still another Monza, this one built by Ron Fournier. With a John Greenwood Corvette coming in fourth, only Peter Gregg's third-place finish in a BMW prevented total American domination of the first five places. It was,

in the view of one American racing expert, "the full flowering of the goals we had in mind when this series started."

The racing Monzas that Dyhstra and Kweck construct now take two months to build. Builders start with a shell-a body "in white," as the racers call it. This is welded to a tubular chassis of mild steel. Then, with the interior gutted, a protective roll cage of steel is built around the driver compartment. A fire extinguisher system, which can be activated by the driver, is installed.

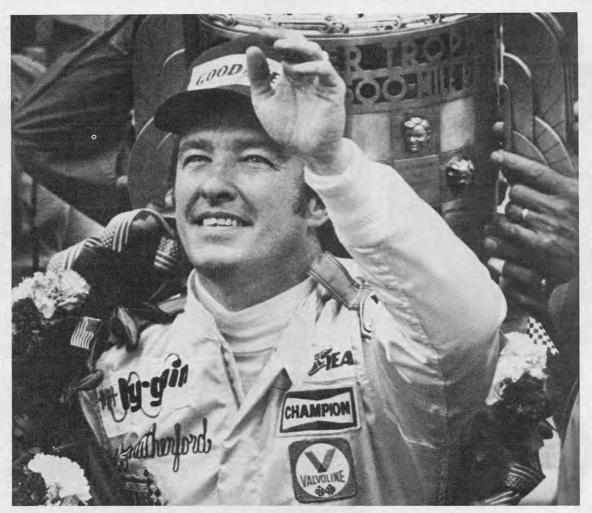
An independent A-frame suspension is used in front, and there are solid rear axles with parallel radius arms. Lockheed brakes are employed, with eight-piston calipers and four pads per disc. Regular Monza production clutches, transmissions and front spindles are retained, but the car is fitted with a McLaren Racing dual-ignition system.

A finished Chevrolet Monza GT racing chassis, with optional fibre glass body panels laid out for quick assembly.

Since the racing Monzas get about five miles per gallon, 31.9 gallon fuel tanks are used. The 350-cubic inch engine is worked on-"breathed upon"-until the racing Monza is able to put out approximately 530 h.p., a necessary figure if you're aiming at top speeds of 200 miles per hour.

Unlike some builders of racing Monzas, Dekon retains most of the car's original steel bodywork. Exceptions are the nose piece, two fenders and fender extensions, all in fiber glass. The extensions, which are "quick removeable," accommodate the racer's need for bigger wheels and tires than ordinary cars require-17 inches in the rear, 12 inches in the front.

The racing Monzas are lower, wider and closer to the ground than their street counterparts. They are



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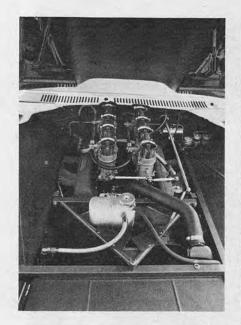
three times greater than in passenger cars.

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41½ inches high and, because of those flares and wide tires, 79 inches wide. They are only three and a half inches off the ground, with fiber glass air dams, or cowcatchers, to help downforce at race speeds.

All seven Dekon Monzas have been built pretty much this way, and all seven are currently active in world racing. The prototype races in New Zealand and another is sweeping the competition in Australia.

How has the Chevrolet Division of General Motors reacted to all this success? Detroit and Dearborn carmakers do not participate in racing themselves, but they all like to see their products out there, particularly when those products are doing well. Piggins says, "We're very pleased to see the Monza as a racing vehicle, in keeping with Chevrolet's past history and experience. We knew that if you allowed American ingenuity to come out, it could win. And that's what's happened here."



What about new racing star Holbert, who, along with Keyser, must be considered a short-odds favorite to win the 1976 IMSA Camel GT series? Does he want to go on to more road-racing laurels in Formula 1 or tackle the Indianapolis 500?

The business-like Monza GT cockpit—just the necessities to harness 530 h.p. on tap from the stock-Chevy powerplant.

"Not me," says the young driver, as sensible as he is talented. "NAS-CAR's big stock cars offer more money and better organization."

# Holy Cow! MUSICAL CHAIRSAT THEMIKES

#### BY LOU PRATO AND JOE LAPOINTE

ast fall, after yet another dismal season for his Chicago White Sox, John Allyn appeared live on a local TV news show. Allyn was then the White Sox owner, and his franchise was failing financially as well as artistically. Part of the blame, Allyn now told sportscaster Johnny Morris, belonged to the team's play-by-play announcer, Harry Caray. In Allyn's view, Caray had created dissension and animosity by criticizing the team's performances on the air.

"No matter what happens," Allyn said on TV, "Harry Caray will not be back next year."

"Have you told Harry that yet?" asked Morris.

"No," Allyn said.

The next time Caray and Allyn met—at a banquet in a pizza par-



lor—Caray walked up to his former boss and flipped Allyn a dime.

"Here," Caray said, smiling. "The next time I'm fired, give me a phone call first."

At lunchtime on another day last fall, a crowd of more than 10,000 rimmed the downtown streets of Pittsburgh, watching a large and merry parade. But while the parade was merry, the occasion was mournful. The marchers and onlookers had turned out to protest the firing of Bob Prince, for 28 years the broadcaster of Pittsburgh Pirate baseball games.

At the heart of the processional behind the marching band, Prince

"I broadcast as a fan would broadcast," says Harry Caray, who occasionally holds court—shirtless—in the bleachers.

#### MIKES

CONTINUED

sat atop a fire truck, waving. With its siren shrieking, the truck drove to Point State Park, and there, the Pirates' captain, Willie Stargell, climbed aboard. Addressing a cheering crowd, Stargell said, bluntly: 'Bob's a landmark. Losing him is like the U.S. Steel Building falling down.'

Harry Caray and Bob Prince

fans stop coming to the park, it's easy to make the announcer a scape-goat." Indeed, ballclub executives do consider announcers critical to profit and loss. "By his method of broadcasting," says Pittsburgh general manager Joe L. Brown, "the announcer can create new fans and a desire to see the team play."

Announcers who constantly criticize a team, thus, or overshadow its successes with their own idiosyncracies, become a liability. Which is why the continued survival of 57-year-old Harry Caray and 60-year-old Bob Prince, both of whom are thriving anew as broadcasters, is so

storm center, headed for it, rode through it, and then flew the plane upside down.

"Can I land her?" Prince said later. "Okay," said the pilot. Prince brought down the plane flawlessly, then proclaimed, "First time I ever did that." His companion returned

to Pittsburgh by bus.

A publicity man for a team the Pirates played one spring training recalls being interviewed on radio by Prince. "It was in one of those dilapidated booths made of tin in an old park. The sun was beating down and it must have been a hundred degrees inside the booth. When I arrived, Prince was naked."

Prince has continually enlivened his broadcasts with gimmicks. He has employed "The Greenweenie"-a green rubber hot dog-to hex Pirate opponents, waggling it from his broadcasting booth at dramatic moments. He has urged displays of "Babushka Power," imploring fans to wave Polish scarves as a symbol of support for the Pirates. He made the phrase "How sweet it is" a salute to Pirate success long before Jackie Gleason made it familiar in other contexts nationally. He earned a reputation as the biggest cheerleader among all baseball broadcasters.

Prince is known too, for his loud sports jackets. "If Bob wasn't wearing one of those outlandish sports coats," says one baseball writer, "I'd think he was sick." And for his story telling. When he and his former partner, Jim Woods, were broadcasting a game from Wrigley Field some years ago, a voluptuous young woman, wearing very little, wriggled down an aisle. "Would you take a gander at that?" Prince roared into the microphone, and spent the next ten minutes saying as much about the woman as the ballgame. "Those twelve years with Prince were the best and zaniest of my career," says Woods.

Three years ago, though, executives of the Westinghouse Broadcasting Co., which owns broadcast rights to Pirate games, began complaining that Prince was doing too much story telling and not enough



When Bob Prince (standing) was fired by the Pirates, 10,000 fans lined the streets of Pittsburgh for a parade in his honor.

were among nearly two-dozen baseball announcers fired last year, an unprecedented season for purged broadcasters. "I don't understand the turnover," said Curt Gowdy, who was dropped by NBC after 12 years. "I've never seen such a wave and I've been broadcasting baseball for thirty years."

Baseball broadcasting, in any year, is a hazardous profession, particularly for those announcers who work with losing teams. "When the club goes bad," says one, "and the unusual. In a field where those who criticize and those with idiosyncrasies do not last long, Caray is perhaps the harshest critic of all, and Prince the most eccentric.

A showman both on and off the air, Prince once was offered \$20 to dive into a hotel pool. He accepted without hesitation, and dove in. From a third-floor window ledge.

Another time Prince and a companion chartered a single-engine plane for a trip to a banquet in a mountainous area of Pennsylvania. During the flight Prince asked if he could take over the controls. The pilot obliged. Prince spotted a small announcing. Prince acknowledges that he'd received such warnings for two years before being fired, but he says, "What do you do when you've got a lousy game? Sure I'd ramble." And, anyway, he maintains there were other reasons behind his dismissal. He claims first, that Westinghouse didn't like the free plugs he gave to charities, and wanted him to concentrate on balls and strikes. "I head three charities in Pittsburgh, including one for retarded kids and the Fred Hutchinson fund for cancer," Prince says. "When I get a chance you can be damn sure I'm going to use fiftythousand watts to give a free plug.'

He also says that Westinghouse did not appreciate his attitude toward people the broadcasting company regarded as VIPs. Prince claims that Westinghouse and some broadcast advertisers allowed clients to sit in his booth and that sometimes the visitors got drunk. "How would you like to have a" bunch of flaming outsiders sitting with you all day in your office?" Prince asks. Once, he says, he almost hit a flaming outsider who-during the broadcast-was playing loud rock music on a portable radio. Another time, when the Cubs' George Mitterwald hit a home run to beat the Pirates, "this idiot behind me started cheering," Prince recalls. "I was so mad I cut the mike and started swearing.

Prince's firing was inevitable, but when it happened there was shock and anger. One hotel chain refused to serve any more beer made by a Pirate advertiser. An auto firm withdrew its sponsorship of Pirate broadcasts. And 10,000 protesters showed up for the Prince parade through downtown Pittsburgh.

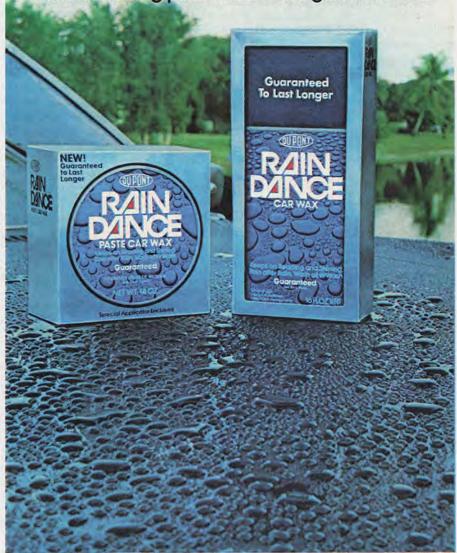
A few months later, Prince was hired to broadcast the Houston Astros games on the Houston radio network. And ABC named him to head its new telecasting team for Monday Night Baseball.

"I guess that kinda sticks it up the babushka of those people who fired me," Prince said happily.

Harry Caray, too, is known for

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#### 

enlivening his broadcasts with gimmicks. He sits in the booth with a fish net, using it to snag foul balls. He occasionally broadcasts from the center-field bleachers, naked to the waist. And he regularly chug-alugs beer as fans in the park cheer him on to swifter and swifter consumption. Caray often used a beer can as a baton while leading the singing of "Take Me Out To The Ball Game" during the seventh-inning stretch.

Like Prince, Caray has been known to digress while describing ball games. During a particularly awful game in Texas during the 1975 season, Caray began to complain about the lack of bars in the Arlington area. "No wonder the population's so big down here," he said. "There really isn't anything else to do."

Bill Mercer, who announced games with Caray for two seasons and who does not admire Harry's critical style, recalls the time Caray read a letter on the air from a woman asking if the handsome young Sox shortstop Bucky Dent made house calls. Another time, Caray was promoting a gimmick game between the players and their wives when, Mercer says, "he paused and said right on the air: 'White Sox wives? I didn't know any of these guys were married."

Beginning with his employment as a St. Louis Cardinal announcer, Caray has made an exclamation-"Holy Cow!"-his trademark, and one of the best known in sportscasting. (Yankee broadcaster Phil Rizzuto subsequently adopted the exclamation.) He was the Cardinal broadcaster for 24 years, leaving in 1969 when-according to rumor—he was fired for having a love affair with the wife of a team executive. "I'd heard about the rumor," Caray says today. "I was flattered. Me, a fifty-year old man with a twenty-three year old girl. But I didn't rape anybody and I didn't break up any marriage. When they fired me they said it was a marketing decision.'

Caray was then hired by Charlie Finley, but lasted with the A's only one year. He came to the White Sox in 1971, and spent five mutually happy years with them. But, during the 1975 season, as the Sox floundered, he became increasingly critical of some of the high-priced stars. He suggested that Bill Melton was "dogging it." In response, the players and manager Chuck Tanner began engaging Caray in shouting matches on the team bus and in hotel lobbies. "If I don't know more baseball than he does," Tanner says, "I'm in trouble."

Chicago fans obviously agreed with Caray. When Allyn fired him, the radio station that carried the 1975 Sox games said it wouldn't do so in 1976 unless Caray were rehired. Angry fans wrote letters to Chicago newspapers criticizing the firing, and telephoned similar complaints to radio talk shows.

"Allyn made a hero out of me," says Caray. "He turned me into the underdog.'

In early January, a baseball writer's banquet was scheduled to celebrate Bill Veeck's takeover of the White Sox. Caray planned to attend. He was still unemployed, but had been talking with Veeck about returning as the Sox announcer.

At 7 a.m. the morning of the banquet, the telephone rang in Caray's hotel apartment suite. It was Charlie Finley, who invited him to breakfast.

"At this hour?" Caray said. "Are you nuts? For what?"

"I want to hire you as my announcer," said Finley.

"But I'm still negotiating with Bill Veeck."

"I want to out-Veeck Veeck," said Finley.

According to Caray, Finley wanted to upstage Veeck at the writer's banquet by announcing the theft of Harry Caray.

Caray said he had to think about the offer for a few days, that he Veeck was upstaged at the banquet, anyway. While Veeck, Bowie Kuhn, Sparky Anderson and Joe Morgan sat at the dais, Harry Caray sat in the back, the center of attention. "We want Harry! We want Harry!" fans chanted.

One week later, Veeck hired Caray. "We don't want a house dog as our announcer," Veeck said. "He's not always kindly, but he's never dull."

'Bill Veeck's my kinda guy," said Caray. "I broadcast as a fan would broadcast.

A few days after that, the Sox tried to put together the first fatherson broadcast team. But Caray's son, Skip, turned down an offer from the White Sox, preferring to work for the Atlanta Hawks of the National Basketball Association.

"He's not like me, anyway." Caray said. "He has that collegiate style."

Few announcers these days are like Caray-or Bob Prince. "I wish I could be as colorful as Harry and Bob," says Dick Enberg, the NBC basketball telecaster who also California baseball. broadcasts They're a dying breed.'

One reason the breed is dying is because former players are taking over the broadcasting booths and they simply do not have the background in entertainment that career professionals do. "One thing the jockstraps should know is that it takes a pro to train them," says Prince, who helped several players. including Ralph Kiner, break into broadcasting. Caray says, "There are some former athletes who are very good and they work at it, like Garagiola, but to so many, it's like a part-time job."

Garagiola, of course, replaced Curt Gowdy this season as NBC's No. 1 baseball announcer. Gowdy won't talk about what happened, but some colleagues believe he lost the job because of Garagiola's influence with a sponsor of the network ballgames.

"Curt was politicked out of the job," says Milo Hamilton, the ancould not accept immediately. But nouncer who replaced Prince in

Pittsburgh. And Ned Martin, who broke in under Gowdy in 1961, when Gowdy was doing Red Sox games, says, "There were a lot of cheap shots taken at Curt. It's a damn shame, but being relieved is all part of the game. Garagiola came along and someone liked him better than they liked Curt and so be it."

Caray isn't surprised by Garagiola's rise. He sat in his Chicago hotel-apartment recently and reminisced about his own experiences with Garagiola. The hour was early; it would be a while before Caray's Rush Street drinking haunts would be open. He sat for a sober discussion about himself and his relationship with the former St. Louis Cardinal catcher. "Joe, himself, didn't understand his own broadcasting talent," Caray said. "I helped him get started back in St. Louis. He was nothing then and I didn't treat my own children as well as I treated Joe. But I don't remember being thanked—ever."

Caray shifted in his chair. Garagiola, he said, once tried to talk Cardinal management into giving him Caray's job. "You know what it was like?" Caray said softly. "Like

a son biting you.'

That was in the early 1960s, Caray said. Garagiola moved on to NBC and, eventually, the Today Show. Caray says he didn't see Joe again until the 1967 World Series.

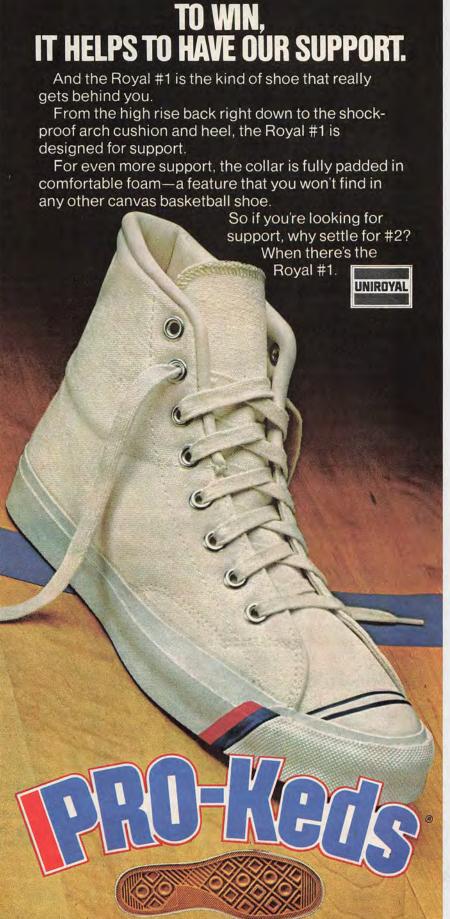
"He brushed by and gave me one of those, 'Hi, howareyas,' " said Caray. "I thought, 'Why you sonuvabitch."

Was Garagiola really that callous? Or is Caray simply bitter that he has received no credit in Garagiola's climb to prominence? Garagiola refuses to say. "He'll talk about any baseball subject but Harry Caray," says Garagiola's NBC secretary.

"What's there to be bitter about?" said Caray, in his Chicago apartment. "I revel in Joe's suc-

cess. I predicted it.'

He paused. Then waved his hand grandly. "Hell," Harry Caray said, put me and Bob Prince in the booth and you can forget all those old jockstraps, anyway."



BY JON TRONTZ

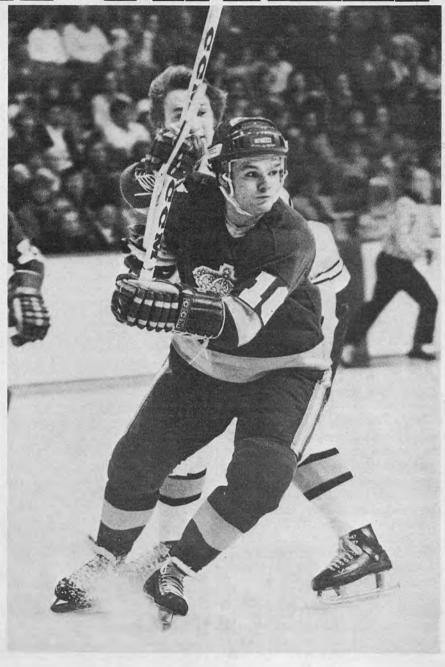
ne would have thought that Jack Kent Cooke had worn out all his superlatives when he'd announced his trade for Kareem Abdul-Jabbar a week earlier. But here he was, on June 23, 1975, summoning the local sporting press to hear news of what he humbly described as "another bomb-shell." By noon, everybody had jammed inside a conference room at the Fabulous Forum and Cooke strutted out from behind a curtain, grabbed a microphone and said, "Gentlemen, I would like to spread some good news. Today, the Los Angles Kings hockey club has signed the most exciting and talented player in the game." Cooke paused, turned to his right and put an arm around a short, stocky fellow in a dark blue suit. "This," said Cooke, "is the man I'm talking about. This is Marcel Dionne."

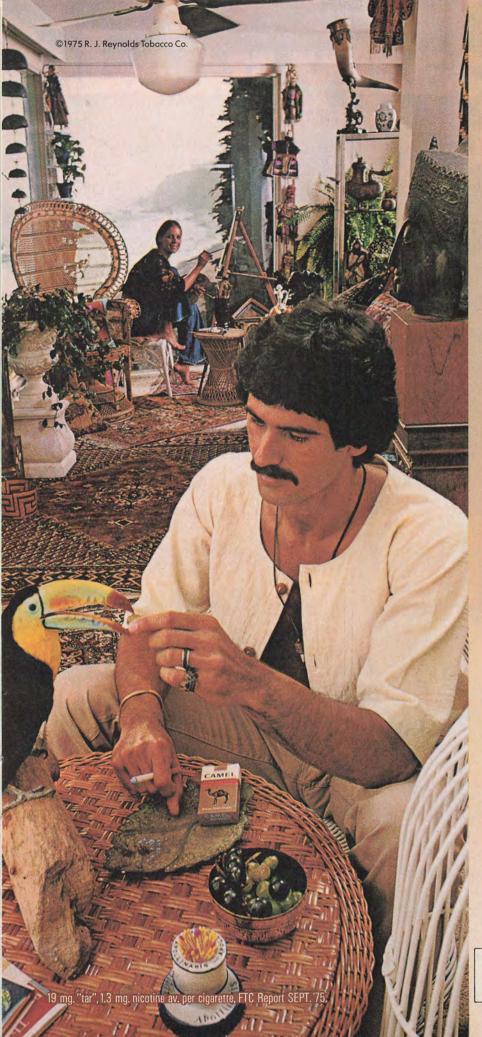
There was applause, mostly from Cooke, as Dionne stepped to the microphone. Then a reporter said, "Jack, why did you get Marcel Dionne?"

Cooke leaned to the mike. "Why did I get him? It's pretty obvious. Marcel Dionne can be our Moses."

Marcel Elphege Dionne-a five-

Marcel Dionne averaged over 90 points per season in four years with Detroit, but he was a moody, self-centered, player.





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#### MISEIT

CONTINUED

foot-seven center—is probably the smallest Moses in history. Dionne is also one of the most creative and exciting hockey players in existence. He zig-zags on the ice with strong, churning strides, bedevils defensemen with head fakes and body contortions, shoots the puck with quick snaps of his wrists. And he has such unique powers of acceleration he can go from fast to very fast without straining, without the familiar jump-step.

Dionne's statistics correspond to his style. He has scored more points in his first five pro seasons—four with Detroit and one with Los Angeles—than any other player in National Hockey League history. His average of over 90 points per season places him behind only Bobby Orr and Phil Esposito in all-time NHL scoring-percentage.

In 1974-75, his last season with the Red Wings, Dionne scored 121 points and won the Lady Byng trophy for his combination of skill and sportsmanship. But when he became a free-agent after that season, only the Los Angeles Kings among professional hockey's 30 major-league teams were willing to pay the price to acquire Dionne.

The reason was that, for all his statistics, Marcel Dionne had a reputation as a moody, self-centered player. Dionne constantly battled with the Red Wings' management, and walkouts, suspensions, namecalling, resignations and firings were as much a part of his game as skates and sticks.

"I wouldn't want him on my team," Philadelphia Flyer coach Fred Shero says. "He doesn't know the words 'team play." He doesn't know the word 'defense.' About the only thing he does know is me, me, me."

Jack Kent Cooke, though, signed Dionne to a five-year contract for \$1.5 million, which made Dionne one of the world's highest-paid



hockey players. At the same time, Cooke called Dionne a new man. A team man. A Moses.

Most people reacted with ridicule. "Marcel Dionne is no Moses," said Ned Harkness, who was general manager of the Detroit Red Wings during three of Dionne's years with the team. "The only tablets he should bring down are aspirin tablets because with him around, Cooke and the Kings are going to need plenty of them."

Only four years earlier, in September, 1971, right after Gordie Howe's retirement as a Red Wing player, Ned Harkness' Detroit club had called a press conference. The Red Wings had finished last in the NHL's East Division and were desperate for a fresh, young star. They announced that they had made Marcel Dionne their No. 1 amateur draft choice. Dionne—who had set an Ontario Hockey Association threeseason junior record by scoring 444 points—was to be the next Gordie Howe.

Unfortunately, Dionne was not ready for that role. He was disappointed that he wasn't drafted by Montreal, which is the dream of every French-Canadian youngster. And he had a strange attitude.

"When Dionne first came to the Wings, there was something about him that irked a lot of people," says New York Islander Gerry Hart,

In his first season with the Los Angeles Kings, Dionne not only scored 94 points—he started playing some defense.

who was Dionne's teammate that first year. "Right off the bat, he got a house far away from anybody else. Then he wouldn't talk to anyone. He seemed very haughty."

Some traced the attitude to Dionne's junior days. There, from the age of 16 when he was given a lucrative deal by the St. Catherines Black Hawks, he was spoiled and fawned over. Brian McKenzie, a junior teammate, says, "We all knew he got special favors. We knew he got more money and new suits and special privileges. But I think all the attention he was getting caused some emotional problems.

"During one year, he broke his collarbone and had to sit out a couple of weeks. We got beat the first game without him and then we won seven or eight in a row. I was scoring pretty well. Anyway, this writer came up to me and asked me if I felt I was in Dionne's shadow, even with him hurt. I said that when Marcel's playing, I always try to get him the puck.

"The next day," he continues, "I saw Marcel and he was really angry. He told me that I was stupid to say such a thing. After that, he wouldn't talk to me anymore. And he wouldn't even come down to the dressing room to see the other guys. He sort of disappeared."

#### 

Dionne also disappeared in his first season with the Red Wings. The Wings were flying to Minneapolis for a game against the North Stars, but at departure time Dionne was not there. The anger of Harkness and coach Johnny Wilson did not diminish when they learned Dionne's excuse-he had overslept. Dionne was fined heavily.

Dionne scored 77 points that season, then a record for points by a rookie. But the Red Wings narrowly missed the playoffs despite Dionne's late-season heroics, and they weren't pleased, overall, with

his performance.

"Several times during the season, I told him he wasn't going all out," Harkness says. "I told him he was dogging it. But instead of listening, he pouted. He never did it all or we would have made the playoffs."

"The pressure was unreal," Dionne says. "Everybody would come up to me and say, 'Hey, are you the next Gordie Howe?' At first, I answered no. I never killed

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anyone with an elbow. Then, I didn't answer at all. I wished everyone would leave me alone.'

Dionne's second season in Detroit, 1972-73, was a statistical success (he scored 40 goals and 50 assists) but an emotional disaster.

"The whole trouble started right off with Ned Harkness," recalls Johnny Wilson, who coached Dionne in his first two seasons. "We weren't playing that well to start the season and, although Dionne was scoring pretty well, Harkness jumped on him.

One day. Ned came to practice and watched from the stands. Then: he stormed back to his office and later told me: 'If Marcel Dionne doesn't move his ass, I'm sending him to the minors. No player is going to run my team. Especially Dionne.' ''

Several weeks later, Dionne had a run-in with Wilson. The Red Wings were on another losing streak and Wilson called a rare Sunday morning practice. When Dionne appeared and listlessly circled the rink, Wilson called him to the sideboards.

'Either skate or get off the ice," said Wilson.

Dionne left the ice. And when he

didn't show up for the game that night, he was suspended.

The following day, Harkness called. "He told me he didn't know anything," said Dionne. "He told me he wanted to see me in his office. in two hours. Fine, I thought. But right after I hung up the phone, I picked up the newspaper. And right there, in black and white, was Harkness' quote: 'John Wilson did the right thing to suspend Dionne. I'm one-hundred percent behind him. He should never take any crap from his players.'

'So, I'm sitting here and the guy just lied to me, eh? I called him right back and said, 'Listen, you're my boss. If I can't trust you, who the hell can I trust?' "

Harkness remembers reacting with annoyance: "I told him he had a persecution complex. I told him he shouldn't take everything so personally. When I hung up, I thought, 'Well, Ned, some guys have million-dollar legs and ten-cent heads." That's the way it goes."

Again, the Red Wings did not make the playoffs. And again Dionne was made out as a villain-even when Harkness fired the coach, Johnny Wilson, "Marcel Dionne isn't a team leader," Wilson said. "He's very immature. He can rip a team apart. He's the main reason I was fired."

On the opening day of training camp for the 1973-74 season, Ted Garvin, the new coach, said Dionne was overweight. When camp broke several weeks later, Garvin insisted that Dionne was still 15 pounds too heavy. So the coach gave his player an ultimatum: Trim down in 15 days or get fined \$100 a day.

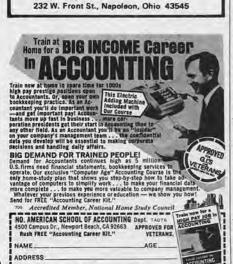
Dionne called Alan Eagleson, his attorney. Eagleson phoned Garvin and told the coach to forget the ultimatum or Dionne would walk out.

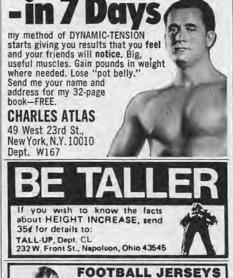
Garvin forgot it.

The season started and Dionne played poorly. He wasn't scoring. He wasn't skating. Eventually, Garvin met with him and said, "I see you're not happy here."

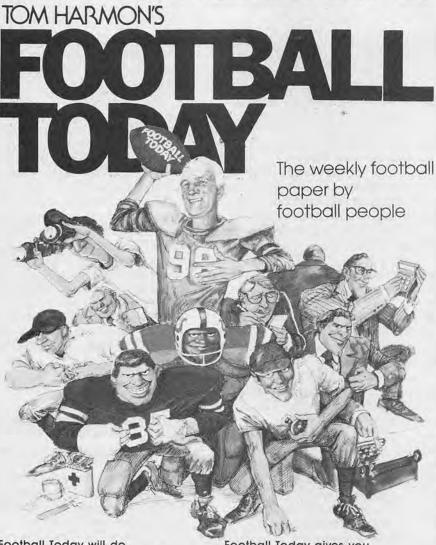
"No," said Dionne, "I am not." "Why not? Why don't you try?"

"Why should I? I'm frustrated. I





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just want to be left alone."

"Well," said Garvin, "I think you're moody.'

"I'm not moody. I want to win." "Then why are you loafing?"

"That's ridiculous. I make more in bonuses than in salary. Why should I loaf?"

That ended the conversation. Says Garvin: "What could I say? I tried to trade him. I flew to New York to meet with Bruce Norris [the Red Wings' owner] and I said let's trade him. Harkness agreed with me. Montreal was offering three good young players for him, Chuck Lefley, Larry Robinson and Yvon Lambert, but Norris said no. He just didn't know what was going on.'

Dionne, meanwhile, had erected a protective shield. He wouldn't talk to his teammates. He ignored Harkness. And, during practices, behind Garvin's back, Dionne would mimic the rotund coach. Each time Garvin attempted some form of communication, Dionne would sneer and turn away.

"Christ," Garvin says, "Marcel Dionne will go through coaches and coaches. He can destroy you. He's the type of guy who scores one goal and is happy, even though his team

might lose."

Harkness fired Garvin after a few more losses and named Alex Delvecchio, the veteran player, coach. The Red Wings, though, continued to lose. And Dionne still couldn't score, going 22 straight games without a goal.

One late Saturday afternoon, a reporter went to Dionne and requested an interview. Dionne often avoided newsmen, saving that most of them were extensions of the management he despised. But Dionne talked to this reporter.

"He says to me, 'Hey, Marcel, there sure are a lot of murders in Detroit, huh?" " recalls Dionne. "I said, 'Yeah, the record shows that.'

Then I told him I had two big dogs at home for protection. Then he says to me that the Red Wings get no respect around the league. I said, 'Well, maybe you're right.' I guess I said a few more things.

"The next day, I saw the big headlines: Dionne laughs at Wings. Dionne hates Detroit.'

That Sunday night, the Wings beat the Minnesota North Stars and Dionne broke out of his slump with two goals. But afterwards in the locker room, Dionne spotted the reporter and threw a wet towel in his face. "I'll get you," Dionne yelled, but he was restrained by teammates.

The 1973-74 season closed with Ned Harkness being fired. And at the beginning of the 1974-75 season. Delvecchio, now both coach and general manager, appointed Dionne captain of the team. Delvecchio hoped the move would force Dionne into assuming some responsibility.

'Going from the doghouse to captain isn't bad, is it?" said Dionne, who seemed most relieved that management had changed.

Dionne scored 47 goals, added 74 assists and set a team mark for total points. But he still refused to backcheck, which meant he would hang at center ice and look for break-His plus-minus aways. ure-which indicates the difference between the number of goals scored by his team and by the opposition when he was on the ice-was a minus 15. The Red Wings finished ahead of only Washington in their division.

Near the end of the season, a reporter in Montreal asked him about the Red Wings' failure. Dionne said, "There are only three guys on this team who should be in the NHL; Nick Libett. Danny Grant and myself.

"I called him in for a conference and he said he was misquoted,' says Delvecchio. "He said he never said it. So I asked him to apologize before the team. Explain it, I said. He hesitated, then said he meant it."

"Alex never asked me to apol-

ogize," Dionne says angrily. "That's a lie. But you know what? I would say what I said again. I am not a hypocrite."

The Red Wings were hardly surprised when, shortly after the season. Dionne told them he would be exercising his option year and not return. "I just didn't want to go back," said Dionne. "All the money in the world [the Red Wings made him a million-dollar offerl couldn't have changed my mind."

Bob Pulford and Jake Milford, the Los Angeles Kings' coach and respectively. general manager. were shocked when Jack Kent Cooke signed Dionne. Both felt the Kings were fine as they were, as evidenced by their own 1974-75 season, in which they accumulated over 100 points and challenged Montreal throughout the year for the division lead.

Cooke, though, had seen the same Kings lose to a mediocre Maple Leafs team in the opening round of the playoffs, mainly because of an inability to score goals. And Dionne was not only a scorer, he represented immediate box office. Indeed, the Kings more than doubled their previous ticket totals after Dionne was signed.

Still, when the deal was made, both Pulford and Milford complained. "Marcel Dionne might change the whole structure of my team," said Pulford, who had built a defense-oriented system accenting team play. "He might ruin our whole philosophy."

"I second-guessed the trade a lot," said Milford. "I was afraid of the effect Dionne would have on our players. A lot of guys were upset. So when Dionne came here, I told him you're going to have to prove yourself. Show us, I said.'

Dionne didn't show much at first. He came to training camp overweight, and Pulford was incensed. The coach assigned Dionne to the "Fat Squad," which required him to go through endless series of stopand-start drills at the end of each practice. After a couple of days, general manager Milford says, "I went up to him, and he just looked

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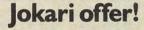
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#### MISFIT

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up and sighed. He said that when he was young, he never got tired. I told him: 'Sure, Marcel, when you were younger, you weighed one-seventy-five. Not one-ninety.''

Dionne trimmed down. But once the season began, Dionne had trouble adjusting to the Kings' tightchecking style and he was often caught wandering at center ice, waiting for a breakout pass. When he did try to play defensively, he seemed hesitant when he got the puck and his entire game suffered.

Pulford had no choice. He told Dionne to concentrate on scoring goals. "You couldn't expect Dionne to change his whole game overnight," said Pulford. "I guess," added Milford, "you can't take a thoroughbred and put him in the fields to plow."

Dionne did as told, scoring 40 goals and 54 assists last season. But the Kings weren't nearly as effective as they had been the year before. They did better, though, in the playoffs, defeating the Atlanta Flames in the opening round, then extending the Boston Bruins to seven games before losing the quarter-finals. Dionne was superb, particularly against Boston, scoring six goals. And even when he wasn't scoring, he was skating hard, harassing the Bruins and battling in the corners. He proved that, even for Marcel Dionne, playing defense and

scoring goals weren't mutually exclusive.

Off the ice, too, there seemed to be positive signs. A bit withdrawn at the start of the season, Dionne gradually grew more open. He joked with teammates. He even talked with reporters, saying, "Here, they don't try to screw you."

"Dionne wasn't at all like he was made out to be," said Mike Corrigan, a King left wing. "He wasn't a big-shot. He could have come in here and said, hey, I'm the big star and I make all the money. But he didn't. And once he proved it to the team, he was thoroughly accepted. Then we could kid him: 'Hey, Marcel, how's the stock market? How's the millions?'

Perhaps the turning point came on November 23, 1975, when Dionne returned to Detroit for a game. Red Wing fans booed him and tossed garbage at him. Red Wing players blind-sided him, slashed him on the legs and, at one point, double-teamed him on a check that knocked him down and sprained his left arm.

But Dionne stayed in the game and the Kings were impressed. "He showed a lot of guts," Corrigan said. "He withstood a lot of abuse. He pushed himself on and showed us he wanted to win."

And Pulford said, "He was a target tonight. But he didn't run. Now, I don't care what anybody says: Marcel Dionne's a good man."

When the Kings boarded their bus after the game, Detroit fans surrounded the vehicle and started shaking it. "We want Dionne!" they chanted.

Dionne looked out the bus window and said, "I felt sorry for me when I was here. People saw me on the streets and I could hear them saying: There goes Marcel Dionne, he's spoiled rotten. Maybe I pushed my luck here too hard.

"Now, though, I'm happy. I can live again. I can play hockey. I'm a little older." He peered into the hostile faces and waved. "You know, I can be very friendly," he said, and flashed his "fans" a great big grin.



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# Bill Fitch onger Say

n 1970, the Cleveland Cavaliers became a member of the National Basketball Association and, simultaneously, a national joke. They lost their first 15 games, prompting The New York Post to sponsor a contest in which the reader who successfully predicted the Cavs' first victory would receive two tickets to a Knick-Cleveland game. Second prize, presumably, was four tickets.

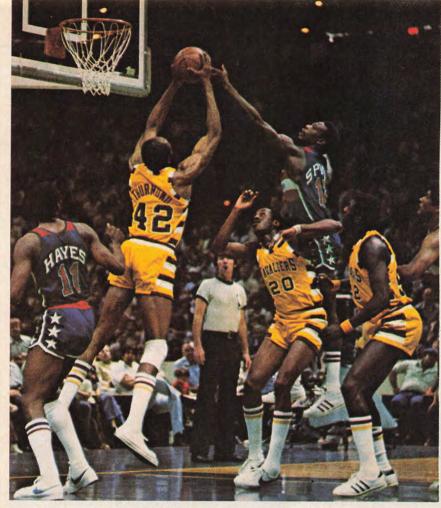
Cleveland's coach and general manager, Bill Fitch, responded to questions about his team's futility with a steady barrage of wise-cracks—an obvious device to retain his own sanity. As soon as the Cavaliers did score their first victory—on November 10, 1970, over Buffalo—they launched another losing streak, which caused Fitch to moan: "Sometimes you wake up in the morning and wish your parents had never met."

For five straight seasons, the Cavaliers carefully avoided the NBA playoffs, and the start of the 1975-76

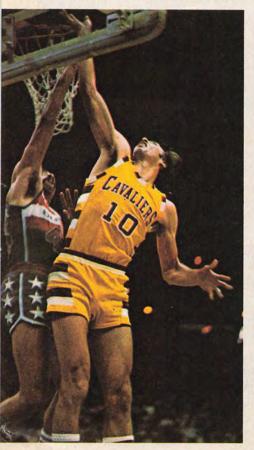
season gave little promise of a different future: The Cavs lost 11 of their first 17 games.

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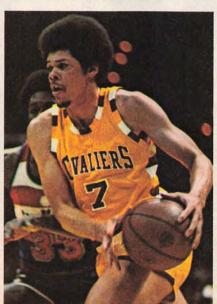
While Austin Carr (number 34) came to the Cavaliers with an All-American reputation, Dick Snyder (10) and Bobby Smith (7), showed up with nothing but talent.

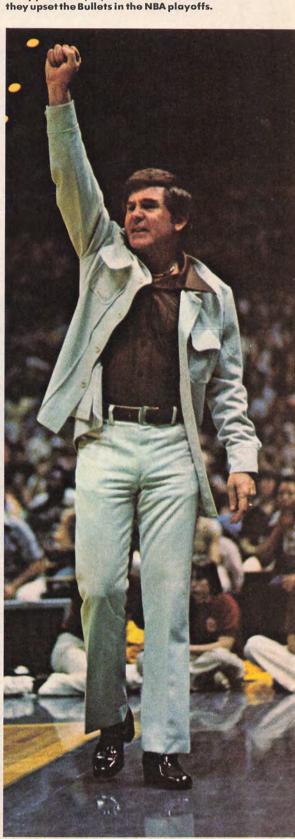


Bill Fitch, below, urges on his Cleveland Cavaliers—at left, Nate Thurmond (42), Campy Russell (20) and Jim Brewer—as they upset the Bullets in the NBA playoffs.











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#### Bill Fitch

CONTINUED

in the NBA's Central Division.

With a modest but balanced offense (of seven men averaging double figures, Jim Chones, an ABA castoff, was top man with 16 points a game), a remarkable defense (inspired by Thurmond in a reserve role) and an explosive bench (Campy Russell and Austin Carr provided instant offense), the Cavaliers went into the NBA playoffs for the first time in their brief history. In the first round, they went up against the Washington Bullets, the team that was supposed to dominate the NBA the previous year. This is what happened:

Game One: Campy Russell is the Cavaliers' most exciting offensive threat, a second-year pro who as a substitute is the team's No. 2 scorer. Projecting his scoring over a full game, the former Michigan All-American would have averaged 30 points per game this season. However, his one-on-one talents mark him as an anomaly on the disciplined, pattern-oriented Cavs, and defensively Campy Russell bears little resemblance to Bill. So Campy's role is to come off the bench as an offensive catalyst.

By the time he gets into the first playoff game—played in Cleveland—his team trails, 37-19.

The instant offense he usually provides is not forthcoming, and Campy's only field goal of the quarter is perhaps representative of the Cavs' futility. He drives the right side and throws his layup over the rim, then, on a followup from the left side, again tosses the ball over the rim, then he misses a straightahead tip and—on his fourth opportunity—makes the tip-in and draws a foul. But at halftime, Russell is one for seven from the field and Washington leads 56-35.

Russell is reinserted late in the third quarter, because, as Bill Fitch says, "Campy's the kind of shooter, he's got the talent to take the shot and I'll be saying no, no, no—then it goes right through." Campy hits Cleveland's last three baskets of the third quarter and fires home ten points in the fourth period. But the Cavs' comeback is too late and Washington wins, 100-95, and ends Cleveland's homecourt advantage.

Dave Bing and Elvin Hayes, the Bullets' top scorers with 24 and 28 points, both discount the Cavs' late surge. Hayes says, "We relaxed, and they were goin' one-on-one more. That's all. We weren't worried."

Yet Bill Fitch is pleased with his team's comeback, and can joke about the Cavaliers' horrendous start: "If we had a second half like the first, we mighta been the first team to forfeit a playoff game."

Game Two: The Cavs have only three players 30 or older: Bobby Smith, Dick Snyder and Nate Thurmond. Those three make the difference in an inartistic 80-79 Cleveland comeback win.

After Thurmond and Austin Carr spark the Cavs to tie the Bullets at 24, Cleveland's offense falls apart. Fitch says later of the Cavs' second-quarter performance: "We played like Russian bandits. We didn't remember whether we were in Washington or New York." Great defense by Thurmond, holding Hayes scoreless and harassing other Bullet shooters, keeps Washington's half-time lead at ten, 46-36.

In his ten-year NBA career, Dick Snyder has bounced from the then-St. Louis Hawks to Phoenix, Seattle and now to Cleveland, his high-percentage shooting keeping him employed. After six lackluster quarters of basketball, Snyder scores 14 second-half points and plays tough defense on Phil Chenier.

Bobby Smith, who after his rookie year at San Diego came to Cleveland in the expansion draft, is the lone remaining player from the 1970 follies. He is the Cavs' best long-range shooter and with 41 seconds left and Cleveland down by one, a play is called for him. In-

decisiveness causes him to travel. But Bing palms the ball, and with six seconds left Smith has a second chance. His 34-footer goes straight through the net. "We were practicing game-enders the whole second quarter," Fitch says, "and it finally paid off on Bobby's shot at the end."

The victory is laced with a certain irony for Bobby Smith, who says, "Even now, nobody knows us."

Game Three: Jim Brewer's offense had been invisible in the first two games, and his rebounding and defense had suffered. "If he can't score on Hayes, he won't score on anybody," Fitch said. "Hayes is layin' back. He's not bothering Jim's shooting."

Today, although Brewer's offense picks up only slightly, he grabs 12 rebounds while passing for six assists and shutting out Wes Unseld in the second half. The Cavs take complete command en route to an 88-76 victory before a playoffrecord 21,061 fans. The Brew, pleasant to reporters even after his disastrous first game, is smiling broadly now. "Elvin was laying back, but when I shoot outside, I can't rebound, so I'm just concentrating on going to the boards and playing defense. I'm more relaxed now. The way we were penetrating today, I just tried to stay out of everybody's way. They didn't need me to do anything but get the ball back for them."

Nate Thurmond is the last Cav to leave the dressing room. Asked how much longer he wants to play, the 13-year veteran says, "I would like to play till I'm sixty-five, tell you the truth. Just what the crowd does for you. The way they cheered when we came on the court, when you heard that, well, I couldn't have started the game today because I was crying.

"I had my brother tape the game—there are still gonna be people who recognize me when I'm forty 'cause I'm six-eleven—but this is what I love, this is what I want to remember. That's why I wanted it on tape—to remember the

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#### **Bill Fitch**

CONTINUED

deafening roar of that crowd."

Game Four: "I don't want to sound like I'm bragging, but I thought it was a great effort on my part. We have three all-pro guards. I consider myself all-pro also. . . ." Washington's Clem Haskins was discussing Washington's Clem Haskins—and his 22 points in a 102-98 victory over the Cavaliers. The series is tied now, two victories apiece, but Washington, with playoff experience, feels it is starting to roll.

Bullet president Abe Pollin gleefully assesses the Cavs' chances in the post-game locker room: "Those illegitimate children won't win another game this season."

Game Five: Elvin Hayes finally gets moving, scoring 25 points. With seven seconds left he steps to the foul line with a chance to sew up the game. Incredibly, the Big E blows both free throws and the Cavs, down by one, call time-out. Washington gives a foul and with five seconds left the Cavs set up a play for Dick Snyder, their hot hand with 26. But the in-bounds pass goes to Bobby Smith, who sees daylight, drives and fires a running jumper that falls short. Jim Cleamons snatches the ball from the air and throws up a layup that hangs on the rim, then topples through. For a moment the action seems frozen, as in a tableau—and the Cavs leap high in exultation at a 92-91 win while their fans storm the court.

In the locker room afterwards, Cleamons seems bewildered by the mob of reporters around him. "Hey, there was no magic," he says. "I just happened to be in the right place at the right time."

An Ohio State graduate and Laker castoff, Cleamons to this point has been showing himself to be as good a defensive guard as the NBA has. He has not shot well, but he plays defense meaner than a junkyard dog, and his crablike fullcourt stalking of Dave Bing and Jimmy Jones created so many turnovers early in the series that the Bullets have been sending Haves or Unseld to midcourt to pick him off. But Cleamons' fierceness, his willingness to swap elbows with Haves and Nick Weatherspoon ("Actually," Cleamons says, "Nick and I are close friends off the court") is in sharp contrast to his quiet, reflective nature. During the National Anthem before each game, Cleamons stands arms crossed, his head bowed in a private ritual, seemingly lost in thought. En route to games, he is usually removed from the kidding and card-playing at the back of the team bus; he just sits there silently, thinking.

Game Six: When he starred at Notre Dame, Austin Carr was the sweetest-shooting guard in the country. The great expectations left by his college career have generally given way to the worst of times, though, as a slow adjustment to the pros was further hindered when Carr had to undergo surgery on his right knee twice in the last year and a half. Tonight, in the Capital Center, he is back in his hometown, playing before parents and friends.

With the Bullets leading 38-21 early in the second quarter, Austin goes to work. Layup and a foul, 18-foot jump shot, driving layup, driving layup, 18-foot jumper, 14-foot jumper, 18-foot jumper. Carr, whose boyish good looks and Cheshire-cat grin make him resemble O.J. Simpson, keeps hitting. But Snyder and Cleamons are a combined four for 27 from the field, and Carr's 27 points aren't enough to prevent the Bullets from winning 102-98 in overtime to tie the series.

Hayes, in his best game of the series, had scored 28 points and blocked eight shots, while Chenier awoke to get 24 for the Bullets. The Cavs are disappointed after coming from far back only to get blown away in overtime, but they don't seem to be discouraged. "You don't see anybody walkin' away with their heads down," Cleamons

says. "Hey, tomorrow's another day. We'll be there."

Game Seven: The illegitimate children rose up and won another tonight and one of Abe Pollin's Thom McAn cordovans is so deeply imbedded in his mouth that it will be a full week before he can extract it and fire his coach.

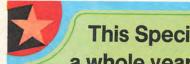
With four seconds left in a tie game, Phil Chenier gets picked off and Dick Snyder has the inbounds pass against Wes Unseld's coverage. Unseld has never been particularly swift, but the playoffs have found him slower than ever, and Snyder drives by Unseld for a right-handed layup off the glass and a playoff-record 21,564 fans are in an ecstatic uproar.

With two seconds left in Washington's season, Hayes misses a shot, Chenier misses a hurried jumper and the Cavs have an 87-85 victory that advances them to the Eastern Conference Finals.

Jim Chones, who floundered in the American Basketball Association, where he was branded a \$1.6 million bonus bust, is asked what the victory means to him. "It's the happiest thing in my life," he says.

Bobby "Bingo" Smith comes out of the shower smiling. Hampered by a bad knee since the fourth game, he kept the Cavs close with eight third-quarter points when his teammates couldn't hit. "It's just another step we have to take," the original Cavalier says. "I worked six long years for tonight. We gained a lot of respect for ourselves."

Epilogue: In a practice prior to the Eastern Finals series against the Boston Celtics, Chones breaks his foot, finishing him for the season. Thurmond, asking his battered body to go fulltime against Dave Cowens, is magnificent the first two games, but the Cavaliers lose both. Boston goes ahead and wins the series, four games to two, then takes the NBA championship. Most of the Cavaliers see the championship game only on television: They can all see themselves playing in it soon.



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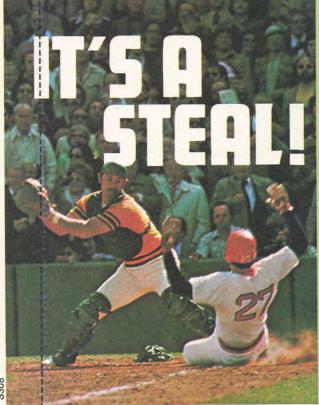
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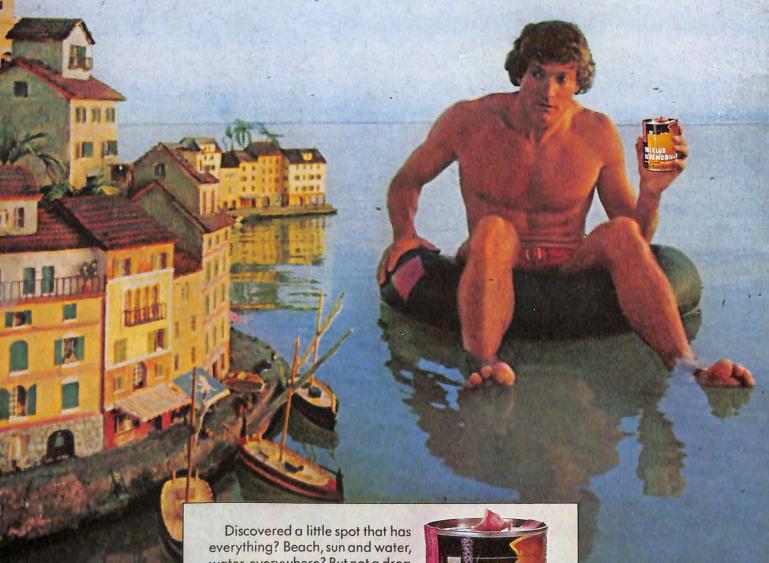
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